

# WARRIOR



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**UNITED WE STAND**

WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE REMEMBERS THE VICTIMS OF 9/11

# ‘Defender Avenger,’ the ‘Fearless’ and Global Strike’s tests of August

By Joe Thomas  
Air Force Global Strike Command

This story is about the men and women charged with preventing large-scale total war. Everything here is factual and provided by eyewitnesses, subject matter experts and Airmen who live and breathe the Global Strike mission. In total, there are nine wings in Air Force Global Strike Command, most with differing specialties but all of equal importance in sustaining a relative world peace. This story is about two of them.

More specifically, this feature serves as a comparative look at two simulated nuclear weapons tests conducted in the month of August 2017 and the units that carried them out. Although the article is limited in scope, its completion would have been impossible without all Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) Airmen and their ability to defend, maintain and employ the world’s deadliest arsenal.

On Aug. 2, 2017, AFGSC conducted a test launch of an unarmed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) at Vandenberg Air Force Base (AFB), just off of California’s central coast. Although the test was planned more than three years in advance, the public forum was abuzz, with many calling the launch a response to Pyongyang’s aggressive rhetoric. Twenty days later, a B-2 Spirit — America’s only stealth bomber — dropped an unarmed B61 nuclear gravity bomb on a small target in the Nevada desert. Hardly anyone noticed.

The common thread: both were routine tests associated with a business that has been paradoxically described as “world saving” and “world ending” by advocates and opponents respectively. Their one agreement: Global Strike Airmen have the awesome responsibility of keeping these weapons safe and secure.

Added to this mission is a conventional capability designed to strategically hamstring an adversary with tailorable combat force delivered from any one of the nation’s long range bombers. The formula is simple: precision, combined with reach and overwhelming firepower.

A series of tests, evaluations and exercises lay at the heart of this business - rigors designed to simulate realistic combat conditions and hone complex skills. The focus of these tests: AFGSC Airmen and their ability to serve as the gatekeepers of global security — a job Airmen have performed for more than 70 years.

## The Launch

The day had barely begun in the early morning hours of Aug. 2, 2017, local officials, the press and service members stood in a viewing area at Vandenberg. When not staring into the starless sky, they traded small talk as they waited for the countdown to begin.

Moments later, an arc of white light pierced the predawn, the fiery wake of an unarmed Minuteman III ICBM. Roughly as tall as a six-story building, the missile approached Mach 23 upon leaving earth’s atmosphere. Its intended target was a small patch of empty ocean in the Kwajalein Atoll approximately 4,200 miles away.

Little more than 30 minutes later, a single ball of light pierced the grey veil of clouds above the atoll, white-hot from re-entry. Viewed straight on, it appeared as a slow-moving flare until only seconds away from splashdown. Its path viewed from the side: a falling star.

The vehicle broke apart on impact, small ocean waves little more

than ripples serving as the only physical evidence of its existence. That ball of light — the Minuteman III’s unarmed re-entry vehicle — carried a test package designed for real-time data delivery, information that simulated the trajectory of one of the world’s most powerful weapons.

As photographers captured imagery of the ICBM upon launch, vigilant professionals tracked the missile’s progress, relaying data output and mission-specific commands in a room too large to be that quiet. Punctuated by large screens, rows of computers and windowed enclosures, it was a dialed-down version of the mission control centers of such films as "Apollo 13" and "Independence Day."

The missileers, either members of the 576th Flight Test Squadron or the 90th Missile Wing (MW) based out of F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming, focused their dialogue on the essentials. For the 90th MW it was the same mission, different location, trading in the sprawling prairies of Wyoming, Nebraska and Colorado for California’s wine country.

“This past test launch had its fair share of challenges, which required us to focus and react quickly,” 1st Lt. Frank Osborn, a missileer who worked the launch, said. “Professionalism must always be in your mind, because at any moment you may have an emergency situation on your hands.”

The 90th MW’s Airmen are trained in the execution of the Minuteman III mission — a counter-strike capability that serves as the United States’ most responsive strategic weapon. Their motto: Impavide — “Fearless.”

Rarely do missileers discuss mission specifics outside of operational circles, not out of fear of sharing classified information, but simply because such talk is unnecessary. Due to global chatter and a 24-hour news cycle, the world was already watching when the missile launched at 2:10 a.m.

Allies and adversaries alike discussed the test the world over, with sources mis-attributing the unarmed launch to regional tensions in the Pacific. However, Global Strike officials quickly point out that each operational test launch is planned three to five years in advance with the sole purpose of validating the reliability of the Minuteman III fleet, a fleet that is spread across 450 silos in Montana, Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado and North Dakota.

“The test launch is not only a show of our capabilities but it is also a way of obtaining accurate data in as near an operational environment as possible,” 1st Lt. Terrence Cole, a 90th MW missileer, said. “So, to achieve the best results, months of planning, preparations and safety precautions go into having a test launch that yields accurate and useable data to make the weapon system more efficient.”

AFGSC calls the Minuteman III “America’s Big Stick,” a reference to the famous quote by President Teddy Roosevelt and the weapon’s role in maintaining a 70-year-old relative world peace. However, it is not the only weapon with such a purpose.

## The Gravity Bomb

Twenty days later, a B-2 Spirit taxied down a runway at Whiteman AFB, Missouri. Its payload: an unarmed B61 nuclear gravity bomb.

The pilot, armed with two checklists, one for the aircraft and one for the simulated nuclear weapon, prepared for takeoff. The B-2 was only seconds away from embarking on the final phase of a Nuclear Weapon Systems Evaluation Program test, or NucWSEP, for the 509th BW.

Their motto: Defensor Vindex — “Defender Avenger.”

Unlike most aircraft that carry the B61, the B-2 is a penetrating bomber, capable of inserting itself into enemy airspace with little to no detection by adversarial equipment. It’s an advantage that has played a crucial role in conflict for over two-and-a-half decades.

Also, largely unseen by many was the weapons load crew — four Airmen who worked tirelessly the day before to install the unarmed weapon and corresponding test instruments. It’s a job that requires the use of a munitions lift truck, a motorized four-wheeled vehicle that lifts a weapon into the receiving aircraft. All of this is done inside a hangar that echoes everything — from the sound of the lift truck’s motor, to the metal on metal clanks of removal, to the yells of Airmen as they coordinate the task of loading. It’s loud.

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## THE WARRIOR

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Published by the **Sedalia Democrat**, a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Air Force, under exclusive written contract with Whiteman Air Force Base.

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The deadline for article submissions to the Warrior is noon Friday. If a holiday falls on Friday, the deadline then becomes 4 p.m. Thursday. Articles will be published on a space-available basis. Submissions do not guarantee publication.

For more information, call the Warrior office at 660-687-5727, email 509.bw.pa@us.af.mil, fax 660-687-7948, or write to us at Whiteman Warrior, 509th Bomb Wing, 509th Spirit Blvd. Suite 116, Whiteman AFB, Mo., 65305.

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## On the cover

U.S. Air Force graphic by  
Senior Airman Jovan Banks

**Members of Team Whiteman gathered together to show their respect to the heroes who gave their lives during the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and Flight 93 on Sept. 11, 2001, in a remembrance ceremony at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., on Sept. 11, 2017. For the photos of the event, see page eight.**



Courtesy photo

A B-2 Spirit assigned to Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, drops a B-61 Joint Test Assembly Aug 24, 2015.



## NEWS BRIEFS



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### Stealth Lounge

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Like the Stealth Lounge on Facebook to stay up to date on special events and tournaments.

### Found property

Keys, wallets, bicycles, jewelry and other items have been turned in as found property to Security Forces Investigation Section. To inquire about lost property, go to building 711, room 305, or call Detective Steven Scott at 660-687-5342.

### WEATHER

<b>Today</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
Sunny	Mostly Sunny
Hi 88	Hi 89
Lo 63	Lo 67

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>
Mostly Cloudy	Chance of Storms
Hi 84	Hi 84
Lo 68	Lo 65

# Communications Squadron: Training, perfecting, improving

**Airman 1st Class Taylor Phifer**  
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Training, it's what most sports team do to prepare for a competition. How a team practices affects how a team will perform when it's game time. The Airmen at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri regularly train in order to perform to the best of their abilities. It is critical that every member of Team Whiteman is prepared for anything that could happen and knows how to act accordingly.

The Radio Frequency Transmission Systems team of the 509th Communications Squadron (CS) conducted their monthly Bomber Strategic Aircraft Recovery Team (B-SART) training Aug. 30, 2017, at Whiteman.

"We make up the communications portion of the B-SART package," said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Derek Tanner, the NCO in charge of the Radio Frequency Transmission Systems assigned to the 509th CS. "Should we be activated, we are able to provide full communications to four simultaneous locations around the world."

During this month's training, Airmen set up metal poles with multiple ropes and lines in order to hoist antennas in the air. The antennas are used for ground-to-ground and ground-to-air communications.

"This training is important because communications are the backbone of the mission," said Tanner. "Communications are essential to mission planning, mission execution and conducting daily operations. Not having the capability to communicate would create a significant obstacle to mission completion."



The Radio Frequency Transmission Systems team of the 509th Communications Squadron sets up equipment utilized during the monthly Bomber Strategic Aircraft Recovery Team (B-SART) training at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., Aug. 30, 2017. This team makes up the communications portion of the B-SART package. When activated, they are able to provide full communication to four simultaneous locations worldwide.

*U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Taylor Phifer*



Every career in the Air Force is essential to completing the mission of 'fly, fight and win - in air, space and cyberspace.' The training that every single Airman does is critical in order to stay focused on the mission. The 509th CS conducts the B-SART training every month and looks for ways in which it can be improved.

"We train to ensure we can set up and operate this equipment in the fastest and most efficient way possible," said Airman 1st Class Kathleen Cummins, a Radio Frequency Transmission Systems technician assigned to the 509th CS. "If something goes wrong, either down range or here at home, people are depending on us and our equipment. In a crazy situation, how quickly we can establish communications is literally life or death. It's that radio call asking for medical aid, a distress signal or the voice telling the aircraft where to strike. We have a saying here in our squadron, 'No Comm, No Bomb'."







**FRIDAY, SEPT. 15 • 7 p.m.**      **SATURDAY, SEPT. 16 • 7 p.m.**  
Hitman's Bodyguard (R)      The Nut Job 2: Nutty by Nature (PG)  
Adults - \$6.25      Adults - \$6.25, children - \$4.00

**SUNDAY, SEPT. 17 • 3 p.m.**  
The Nut Job 2: Nutty by Nature (PG)  
Adults - \$6.25, children - \$4.00



# Defend, Avenge

Continued from Page 2



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Ian Dudley  
**An unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile launches during an operational test at 2:10 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time Aug. 2, 2017, from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.**

Despite the noise, evaluators observed these Airmen every step of the way as if they were performing the task for an actual combat operation. It’s a process that is sober, methodical and highly professional.

“These Airmen train how they fight,” Larry Hannon, a bomber test manager for AFGSC, said. “This was an end-to-end test that simulates operational realism. More importantly it validates their ability to execute the mission if called upon by the president of the United States.”

Hannon, a member of AFGSC’s Directorate of Operations and Communications, a key division in monitoring the test, refers to the fact that only the U.S. president can authorize the use of a nuclear weapon. He additionally explains that although certain models of the B61 are considered “bunker busters” (able to penetrate an adversary’s most entrenched, reinforced defenses), this particular model was a test package meant for simulation only.

The B61 test package is easily discernible by its bright orange paint and white stripe. Unlike a cruise missile that propels itself to a designated target, the B61 is designed to execute a precise and controlled descent. A capability that is one part targeting equipment and one part skill, which is highly intuitive and hard earned from rigorous training on the part of the B-2 aircrew.

After performing several tasks during the airborne portion of the evaluation, the B-2 releases the weapon. Within seconds, the B61 spits out a spiral of smoke before rapidly spinning.

The weapon continues to fall until it is half submerged in the flat, off-white landscape of the Nevada desert. There is no detonation.

Although the NucWSEP involved a simulated B61, the process validated Team Whiteman’s ability to carry out this mission in real-time, under real-life conditions. It is only one in a series of arduous tests the Airmen will have to undergo, whether they are validating the effectiveness of the weapon, themselves or both.

## The Triad

The Minuteman III serves as the only ground-based leg of the “Nuclear Triad,” which is the combination of ICBMs, strategic bombers, and nuclear-capable submarines responsible for maintaining global stability. The former two belong to Air Force Global Strike Command. The latter belongs to the U.S. Navy.

The B-2 Spirit shares the strategic bomber leg with the B-52 Stratofortress and B-1 Lancer. It’s a complex mission as the B-2 and B-52 both support nuclear and conventional missions. The B-1 Lancer is a conventional bomber only, bringing its own scalable advantages to the global fight, advantages that are in high demand by U.S. military commanders the world over.

Wherein lies the term “strategic.” Like few other options in the nation’s inventory, these assets, both nuclear and conventional, are specifically designed to target an adversary’s Achilles’ heel, regardless of whether or not they are a large country or non-state organization. This is achieved by bypassing battlefields, troop movements and other tactical situations on the ground — a capability that has proven essential in maintaining the upper hand for more than 70 years.

For this reason, AFGSC Airmen are supporting most of the nation’s combat operations around the world while simultaneously keeping a peace between larger powers – a birthright granted from their Strategic Air Command heritage.

Meanwhile, Airmen at home develop their combat skills and validate the nation’s ability to strike globally from home station. In tandem with the U.S. Navy’s submarine force, the nuclear triad serves as the nation’s main deterrent against large-scale aggression, a deterrent that is predicated on the belief that war against the U.S. and its allies is not worth the cost.

The records and doctrine of the U.S. Air Force continuously state that the United States can’t win a war without airpower. An equally accurate statement: the nation can’t prevent one without Global Strike Airmen.



# Welding the bonds of success

By Senior Airman Jovan Banks  
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

The members of the 509th Maintenance Squadron (MXS) metals technology shop are a part of a strong chain and are welding daily to make that chain stronger.

Whiteman Air Force Base has a unique mission and with that mission comes the responsibility of carrying out daily tasks that make Whiteman the nation's premier bomb wing.

"During my time here I've learned that, through dedication, you can learn anything and achieve so much," said U. S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Gildardo Martinez, an aircraft metals technology journeyman assigned to the 509th MXS.

Coming from the field of web development, Martinez has taken that mentality and applied himself.

"With very little knowledge about the mechanical world, I came here, learned a ton and have risen to become Airman of the Quarter at the group level."

One thing that this could be accredited to is the environment and the shop's unique approach to maintenance.

"The average metals technician should not only be able to repair equipment through guidance, but also be knowledgeable enough about the inner workings of a component," said Staff Sgt. Steven Lynch, a metals technol-

ogy craftsman assigned to the 509th MXS.

Metals technology is a vital component of not only Whiteman's flying mission, but also the many missions of grounds equipment.

"Metals tech is a more unique career field in that we are not dedicated to only working on aircraft components," said Lynch. "We have a wide variety of projects that range from routine weld repairs on Aerospace Ground Equipment platforms to performing maintenance on dining facility equipment."

Having an in-house metals tech shop reduces the time aircraft are down while also producing quality work on every part repaired.

"Without our expertise, some parts of the aircraft may never be replaced," said Martinez. "The base would have to reach out to another machine shop that may not have the same flexibility and attention to detail as Airmen from our shop."

The pressure of being responsible for parts needed in order to continue flying can be difficult, but in the end it is a gratifying feeling of accomplishment, said Martinez.

"Knowing that the aircraft is grounded, awaiting a part that I need to manufacture is a huge weight on my shoulders," said Martinez. "It's very stressful but equally as rewarding when I complete it. Seeing it take off is like watching your child go off to college; you've succeeded."



The Airmen of the 509th Maintenance Squadron metals technology shop make repairs to various pieces of equipment at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., Aug. 18, 2017. These Airmen are responsible for the creation and repair of aircraft, aerospace ground equipment, and service equipment for base-wide operations. The metals tech Airmen are expected to be knowledgeable about the inner workings of a component to go beyond routine repairs.

*U.S. Air Force photos by Senior Airman Jovan Banks*





# Remembering the fallen heroes of September 11, 2001



Airmen assigned to the 509th Bomb Wing participate in a 9/11 remembrance ceremony Sept. 11, 2017 at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. The ceremony included a moment of silence and the placing of a wreath honoring those killed during the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. The ceremony was held to commemorate the 16th anniversary of the terrorist attacks that claimed the lives of approximately 3,000 innocent people at the World Trade Center, Shanksville, Penn., and the Pentagon.

*U.S. Air Force photos by  
Senior Airman Jovan Banks*



# Kansas City Royals Military Appreciation Game



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Taylor Phifer

The Kansas City Royals and the Chicago White Sox baseball teams join military members and fans as they pay respect as the National Anthem plays before a game at Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City, Mo., Sept. 11, 2017. Following the National Anthem, four A-10 Thunderbolt IIs from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., performed a flyover. Throughout the military appreciation game, service members and veterans of all five branches of the military were recognized.



# Clean water on Whiteman

**Airman 1st Class Taylor Phifer**  
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

The Water and Waste Treatment Plant (WWTP) at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, has an impact on the base that many may not realize. The Airmen collect and treat the wastewater that comes from the base and also maintain the equipment used with the water. To ensure clean water leaves the plant, the water goes through various treatment stages.

“Our main objective is to make sure the local waterways stay clean,” said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Bogedain, the NCO in charge of the water and waste treatment facilities assigned to the 509th Civil Engineer Squadron (CES). “It’s an important job because we take all the base’s wastewater to collect and treat it. Without the Airmen working in this plant, there could be diseases, smells and other unsanitary things around base.”

The WWTP is essential for Whiteman's mission. The Airmen who work at the plant create a higher quality of life on base by taking care of all the wastewater.

“We are responsible for treating the wastewater that comes from Whiteman,” said Bogedain. “Anything that gets put into the sewage system will eventually get to the plant.”

There are several qualifications required to become a WWTP operator.

“We need to be certified through the state of Missouri and trained because we are dealing with wildlife,” said Senior Airman Anish Chauhan, a water and fuel systems management journeyman assigned to the 509th CES. “If the water isn’t treated properly before it’s released, it will go to the nearest river or lake and could harm the fish or other animals drinking that water. We have to ensure the water we release is as clean as the water we get from nature.”

An individual must learn all the facets of the job and meet certain time qualifications. After those are met, they must take a state-certified exam to become a licensed operator. Once the person has his or her license to operate he or she must maintain it by attending classes. A person can upgrade the license by attending a class and taking a higher level exam. By attending these courses, one earns Continuous Education Units used to maintain or upgrade a license.

Members who work at the WWTP must stay well educated and up-to-date on training needed for the day-to-day operations. This career field contains a lot of training, progress and expertise, but it is a mission-essential job.

“This job is unique to our career field because most bases don’t have a wastewater system, or if they do it is contracted out,” said Bogedain. “Our career field covers many areas of the base from wastewater treatment, water distribution, liquid fuels management, swimming pool maintenance and more. Honestly, there is never a boring day since you can find yourself doing a number of different things throughout your career.”



Members of the Water and Waste Treatment Plant (WWTP) perform maintenance to the headworks of the WWTP outside Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., Aug. 29, 2017. The headworks are the part of the plant where the wastewater initially meets the system. The headworks have a screen and an auger that filters containments. Members of the WWTP Team are responsible for collecting and treating the wastewater at Whiteman.

*Courtesy photos by  
Waste Water Treatment Plant*



# New mother's expressway at Whiteman

By 2d Lt. Allen Palmer

509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Parenting is a full-time job and as any parent knows, the hours are unconventional to say the least. At the office, at home or in the middle of the night, it doesn't matter, once you are a parent, you are on call anytime, anywhere. New mothers in particular have tremendous demands on their attention and time. This is why the 509th Bomb Wing (BW) is doing its part to aid in the transition for new mothers once they return to work at Whiteman Air Force Base (AFB), Missouri.

The 509th BW recognizes that breastfeeding promotes optimum growth and development for infants as well as carries many health advantages for new mothers. In support of this, the creation of "Mother's Expressways" or expressing lounges have been implemented around base. The Medical Group (MDG) also received a brand new "Leche Lounge" or expressing pod for new mothers located at the 509th MDG. The Leche Lounge benchmarks the first expressing pod of its kind in the Air Force.

The expressways can be found at 10 locations around base and guarantee a minimum of one room within each group and wing staff agency. In order for an expressing lounge to be approved as an acceptable Mother's Expressway, the space has to satisfy certain criteria. Primary being, a location that is secure, sanitized, private and equipped with an electrical outlet. Members who use the new rooms will share the responsibility of ensuring the designated areas are kept clean through the use of proper hand hygiene and by sanitizing all contacted areas with antimicrobial wipes provided by the units.

The Air Force also aids the transition of new mothers with Air Force Instruction 44-102 which states: each on-duty military and civilian member who is breastfeeding will have ample time to express breast milk and that supervisors at all levels authorize break time for nursing mothers and consider flexible schedules to balance their needs and the mission requirements.

"Whiteman AFB wants our working mothers to know how important they are to the Air Force," said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Melia Baxter, a dental assistant assigned to the 509th MDG and project lead. "The new Expressways at Whiteman are a testament that we heard and understand [our Whiteman mothers'] needs. The Expressways will provide a safe and comfortable space for the mothers to express breast milk. They were specifically designed for our Air Force mothers, and will be available whenever the need arises."

With the new Mother's Expressway lounges located around base and the first ever Leche Lounge located at the 509th MDG, Team Whiteman is making sure new mothers are getting what they need to be successful. In honor of this, the 509th MDG will be celebrating the creation of the new rooms with an official ribbon cutting ceremony Sept. 26, 2017.

To find an expressing location closest to you, contact the 509th MDG New Parent Support Program Manager at 660-687-4589.

**EXCELLENCE  
IN ALL WE DO**