



# Fact Sheet

# United States Air Force

91st Strategic Missile Wing  
Minot AFB, N.D. 58705-5000

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## MINOT AIR FORCE BASE

Minot Air Force Base has been a fixture in America's defense for 30 years. Air Force leaders in the post-Korean War era believed that the northern United States, along the Canadian border, would be a primary attack route for enemy bombers. The Air Force originally considered areas around Fargo and Bismarck, N.D., but later chose Minot.

The city welcomed the base and, in fact, helped pay for the land on which the base now stands. In 1955 the Minot Chamber of Commerce collected \$50,000 from local businesses and citizens, and donated the money to the U.S. government to help purchase land for the new base.

Land acquisition began in May 1955, construction started in May 1956, and Minot AFB was officially activated Jan. 10, 1957. The base today spans approximately 5,000 acres.

Minot began as an Air Defense Command base under the control of the 32nd Fighter Group, which was activated in February 1957. The first permanent Strategic Air Command unit here was the 4136th Strategic Wing, which was activated in September 1958. The 4136th's KC-135 Stratotankers provided air refueling for northern air defense operations. The 5th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, a member of the 32nd FG, brought brand new F-106 Delta Darts to the base in January 1960.

SAC's mission continued to expand. In July 1961 the 4136th SW received a squadron of B-52H bombers. Later in 1961 the Air Force selected the land around Minot for a new Minuteman I Intercontinental Ballistic Missile complex.

Construction of the missile sites began in January 1962. On June 30, 1962, control of Minot AFB passed from ADC to SAC. As the missile complex took shape, SAC activated the 455th Strategic Missile Wing here in November 1962. In February 1963, SAC inactivated the 4136th SW and activated the 450th Bombardment Wing to control B-52 and KC-135 operations here. The first Minuteman I missile reached here in September 1963, and the 455th SMW achieved full operational capability in April 1964.

Base organizations changed again in mid-1968 when the 91st SMW replaced the 455th, and the 5th BMW took over for the 450th. These actions continued the Air Force policy of keeping units with the most distinguished histories on the active roster. Today, these units work side-by-side, representing two elements of America's strategic triad.

Force modernization has characterized this base since the 70s. In 1970 the Air Force chose the 91st SMW as the first missile wing to convert to the new Minuteman III ICBM. The 741st Strategic Missile Squadron became the first operational Minuteman III squadron in December 1970. The entire wing was converted by December 1971. The 5th BMW added the Short-Range Attack Missile to its arsenal in September 1973. The Minuteman upgrade silo plans and command data buffer modifications, completed in February 1976, made Minot's missiles the most versatile and modern in the Minuteman fleet.

Following the 1980 Iranian hostage crisis, Minot's 57th Air Division organized the Strategic Projection Force. The 5th BMW's B-52 fleet became the spearhead of the SPF, which has proven itself able to conduct conventional warfare across the globe. With the 91st SMW's Minuteman force ever-ready and the 5th BMW scheduled to receive the Air-Launched Cruise Missile in 1988, Minot AFB will remain in the forefront of national defense for years to come.

In recent years Minot's people have proven the base motto that 'Only the Best Come North' by capturing SAC and Air Force-wide honors in security police, air refueling, communications, munitions, munitions maintenance, child care, and other fields.