

Introduction

When I reported to Stony Brook Air Force Station in the fall of 1956, it had been in operation for about two years. Built in 1954 as one of the last Operational Storage Sites in the United States, Stony Brook eventually housed approximately 400 enlisted men, officers and civilians. Originally staffed by members of the 1091st Special Reporting Squadron out of Sandia Base, New Mexico, the unit assignments gradually changed into early 1957. When I arrived at Stony Brook, the units assigned to that station were the 3084th Operations Squadron (my assignment), the 3084th Support Squadron, the 3084th Aviation Depot Group Headquarters Squadron and the 3084th Security Squadron. The 3084th Operations Squadron was redesignated the 3097th Aviation Depot Squadron in early March of 1957. The unit designations remained the same during my tour there from late 1956 until my separation from the Air Force in July 1959.

Memories of my arrival at Stony Brook as well as most of the daily activities remain, at best, blurry after so many years. A few incidents do stand out in better clarity and are included in the memories section later in this book. My first impressions of Stony Brook were positive, with the barracks, mess hall and other perks being quite a step up from my experiences in basic training and at tech school at Lowry AFB in Denver. The barracks rooms were semi-private accommodations that were very comfortable and roomy compared to the bunks and open bays of my previous assignments. When I first arrived, I had a roommate, but at some future date I had a room all to myself. Great duty. The mess hall was excellent, although some of the menu items were similar to earlier experiences, like "SOS" for breakfast and "mystery meat" for dinner. But, overall, the food was great and the surroundings more than acceptable. The Air Force treated us well in that regard. I am sure that, with Stony Brook being a vital part of our country's defenses during the Cold War, we were all treated better for that reason.

Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays became special treats with lots of food, festive decorations and atmosphere. Of course, we had the usual aspects of military life, such as KP, barracks and other details, room and building inspections, and discipline. However, those were a small price to pay for the better than average treatment we received. The responsibilities shouldered by the officers and enlisted men on Stony Brook at that time, as well as the other sites, were awesome now that I look back on that period. As the history of the Cold War is disclosed in greater detail to the American public, it will be better understood how truly dangerous this period was and how close the world came to total destruction. The initial disparity between the immense military might of the army of the Soviet Union and the demobilized American military following World War II was offset to a great extent by our nuclear weapons arsenal. The ability to assemble and deliver nuclear weapons in a timely and efficient manner to all of our strategic forces became a battle of extreme importance.

With the successful detonation of their own nuclear weapon by the Soviet Union in 1949, the ability of the United States to build, maintain and expand its nuclear forces took on an even greater urgency. Thus came the advent of the Operational Storage Sites such as Stony Brook, Rushmore, Caribou, Deep Creek and Fairfield, of the Strategic Air Command, and of the later concepts of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and Massive Retaliation. The role that these sites played during this period is little known except by those that served on them. Of course, the need for secrecy at that time was paramount. Now almost 50 years later, the story of these dedicated veterans needs to be told.

This book derives from many sources. It is a compilation of personal experiences, Air Force and DOE documents, internet resources, and declassified military histories and records. Many of the photographs included herein were taken by William Lindstrom and myself during a tour of the old Stony Brook site in June of 2002. Grateful appreciation for that tour is extended to the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company who is now the primary owner of the Stony Brook properties.

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