COWLEY COUNTY'S PART IN WINNING THE COLD WAR:
The Titan II Missile Complexes
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INTRODUCTION

Let's go back fifty years to the 1960s and 1970s. How many of you drove along a rural road in Cowley County and noticed a strange looking site that just didn't fit into the landscape? A woven wire fence with strands of barbed wire along the top encompassed approximately ten acres. Within this enclosure were a large concrete slab, a small shed, and what looked like two large car washes. Just outside the enclosure was an object resembling a huge metal Christmas tree. Obviously, it had nothing to do with raising corn, wheat, beans, or livestock.

If you had been reading the newspaper, you recognized it as one of the SM-68B Titan II missile complexes which had recently been installed around Wichita. Your first thought was probably: What's going on down there?

I'm sure some of you had an opportunity to visit a complex, and if you didn't, that was unfortunate. After a few years of operation, with security and safety established, many tours were given to groups and organizations on the weekends. The combat crews and other military personnel enjoyed showing off this elite system of which they were an integral part.

THE COLD WAR

The Cold War resulted in the construction of these missile complexes. Cold War was "the name given to the relationship that developed primarily between the USA and the USSR after World War II, and it was to dominate international affairs for decades…A clash of very different beliefs and ideology – capitalism versus communism – each held with almost religious conviction, formed the basis of an international power struggle with both sides vying for dominance, exploiting every opportunity for expansion anywhere in the world." [1]

The missile complexes in this area were a testament to Cowley County's involvement in the Cold War, and were an integral part of our strategic arms buildup. This arms race eventually