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**At SAC's Nerve Center,
The Surface Seems Calm**

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BELLEVUE, Neb., Oct. 25 — President Nixon's military alert radically changed the daily routine of life today for hundreds of Air Force personnel at Offutt Air Force Base here, the worldwide nerve center of the Strategic Air Command.

But on the surface, which was all that an unauthorized visitor could see, life seemed to go on as it would on any other 70-degree Indian summer day.

Informed sources gave various times for when the alert sounded here. But sometime shortly after midnight today—for the first time since 1968, when North Korea seized the Pueblo — members of SAC's designated a battle taff were awakened in their quarters and summoned to the service's underground command center, an imposing, closely guarded seven-story building with four floors underground.

There, as high ranking officers filed into their seats in the command balcony overlooking the room, computers spit out reams of data on weather at potential worldwide targets SAC, whose 162,000 military personnel make up the nation's principal nuclear strike force of bombers and missiles.

Bombers Set for Take-off

Around the world S.A.C. bombers were wheeled to take-off positions, for a time at least, crews stayed aboard their craft for instant take-off if necessary.

Security at bomber bases and missile launching sites across his country was also tightened.

There are no bombers stationed at Offutt Air Force Base, a 1,898-acre installation 12 miles south of downtown Omaha. Once an Army base called Fort Crook (for an Indian-fighter named George Crook), Offutt has runway and taxiing strips that were cornfields until Capt. Ira A. Rader carved out an air base in 1924.

Its name came from First Lieut. Jarvis Offutt, a pilot and the first casualty from Omaha during World War I.

The base, near the geographical center of the continental United States, exists primarily for the Strategic Air Command, which is headed by Gen. John C. Meyer, a former fighter-pilot ace.

There are 11,653 military personnel here involved in Air Force intelligence, meteorological, reconnaissance and flight-planning facilities. But many of these services came here primary for the use of S.A.C.'s sophisticated battery of blinking computers in the headquarters building.

Identity Cards Checked

Early today gate guards checked everyone's identity cards thoroughly. But later the checking seemed more lax.

The only apparent differences in the daily routine was the presence of more armed security forces, standing by interior gates and doors with walkie-talkies and rifles. Some sneaked smokes in cupped hands when no officer was present.

At the end of the runway just across the street from General Meyer's home and next door to the headquarters buildings was General Meyer's personal 707 aircraft, its jet engines whining and fuming all day long as maintenance crews checked instruments and stood by for orders that would take the craft down the runway and out over Nebraska's cornfields to the west.

Otherwise, life went on as usual. Air Force wives in sweaters and slacks, some of the 25,659 Air Force dependents on the base, strolled or jogged along the 36 miles of roads called Generals Row, Grant's Pass and Custer Road.

Business was brisk at the post exchange, and construction continued on the new commissary. In fact, a number of those personnel not on alert underground at headquarters enjoyed the regular Thursday evening "happy hour" at the Officers' Club.