

## DEPARTURE HAS IRONIC TWIST

# Roswell Says Farewell To Last of B-52 Bombers

It was fate that this aircraft was selected, and it was strictly a coincidence, Col. R. H. Worrell Jr. said as the 6th Strategic Aerospace Wing's last B-52 "Sir Pride of Roswell," lifted from the runway at Walker Air Force Base today.

"Someone in Omaha (SAC headquarters) just picked the right serial number," Col. Worrell said. So, "Sir Pride of Roswell," judged the best aircraft in SAC, at last year's bombing and navigation world competition, was the last B-52 to leave the base, at 10:35 a.m. today, for its new base, Castle AFB, in California.

The crew from Castle, sent here to fly the aircraft to Castle, to a man had formerly been stationed at Walker Air Force Base. And the crew flew the aircraft low over the city as a final salute to Roswell.

"I would say it took off reluctantly," Mayor Gail Harris said as the heavy aircraft, loaded with fuel, appeared to lumber down the runway. The flight line at WAFB looked strangely deserted with no B-52s and only three other aircraft sitting outside maintenance buildings.

The 33rd and final long-range strategic bomber to be reassigned due to base closure was ironically the aircraft picked earlier to represent Roswell in the bombing competition at Fairchild AFB, Wash.

In a short ceremony preceding the take-off, Col. Worrell, wing commander, presented Mayor Gail Harris an engraved plaque recognizing Roswell's "25 years of outstanding community support". Mayor Harris

accepted the plaque on behalf of all the citizens of Roswell and designated it be hung in the office of the Chamber of Commerce. Mayor Harris presented it to Bill Wolf, Chamber president.

The final bomber departure left Walker's flight line nearly devoid of aircraft. One KC-135 tanker, and two C-47 transports are all that remain. The KC-135 is scheduled to leave Thursday for the 305th Air Refueling Squadron at Bunker Hill Air Force Base, Indiana. Both C-47s will remain at Walker for operational support.

Walker's fleet of bombers has been dispersed throughout the

United States to other Strategic Air Command units in the 2nd, 8th and 15th Air Forces. B-52 crews have generally not gone with their aircraft but have been absorbed in normal assignments throughout the Air Force.

With the loss of aircraft, maintenance squadrons will inactivate during the January-March quarter of 1967 as will the squadrons of the 6th Combat Support Group. Personnel in these units will gradually move to their new assignments during the coming months.

In a statement prepared for the ceremony, Wolf, Chamber president, said:

"For the past 25 years we have made many close and enduring friends.

"This is a saddened moment for us to witness the last of the B-52s leave Walker Air Force Base.

"But we want you to know, that wherever you go, we will always remember you and will always take pride in the men of Walker and the many contributions they have made in the growth of our community.

"God bless you, the people of Roswell will always be with you."



**PRIDE OF ROSWELL LEAVES** — The last B-52 assigned to Walker Air Force Base departed the base at 10:35 a.m. today after a brief ceremony in which Col. R.H. Worrell Jr., wing commander, left on platform, presented Mayor Gail Harris a plaque commemorating 25 years of close association between Walker AFB and Roswell. (Record Photo)