

Association of Air Force Missileers AAFM Newsletter

"Victors in the Cold War"

Volume 17r Number 1
March 2009

Life after Missile Duty Part II - Page 9



Atlas E RV Installation

Keeping SAC's Edge - by Col Charlie Simpson, Executive Director

In the last few months, the Air Force's nuclear mission has come under extremely close scrutiny and a lot of press coverage, starting with the improper movement of armed cruise missiles on a B-52, shipping of Minuteman materials to Taiwan by mistake, marked as helicopter parts, to the recent failure of all three missile wings during new, toughened nuclear surety inspections. Many of our members have had a lot of experience with nuclear weapons, from the very earliest days of our tactical and strategic missile systems. The majority of us served in the Strategic Air Command, an organization noted for its discipline and structured ways of doing things.

Many of us have been away from the active force for some time, so we aren't privy to or current on today's oversight programs, but we know what we lived with in the days of SAC and the results obtained. This article looks at the way we were monitored, inspected, evaluated and led during over 40 years in a command that had a reputation of demanding perfection. Even during our time in SAC, at least in my 30 years, things changed, but the emphasis on nuclear procedures never did.

All of us who served in SAC missiles (and aircraft, for that matter) were no strangers to tough disci-

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Silent Sentinels - By David A. Lien, MbrNo A1173, Colorado Springs, CO

After completing four years of college and Air Force ROTC at the University of Minnesota - Duluth (on 18 July 1990) I was commissioned as an Air Force officer, and during May 1991 this newly-minted second lieutenant drove cross-country from Minnesota to report for active duty and Undergraduate Missile Training (UMT) at Vandenberg AFB in California. But before reporting to Vandenberg, I visited Yosemite National Park.

Not being able to enter Yosemite from the east due to winter road closures, I drove over the Sierras north of the park through a minor snowstorm and was relieved to reach a town on the western slope after several hours of tight-fisted, low visibility, slippery nighttime driving. The next day I roamed the fog- and mist-shrouded Yosemite Valley, watching with amusement as a minor traffic jam developed due to a coyote trotting alongside the road.

During its busiest months, Yosemite Valley - which is only seven miles long and one mile wide - can be a Manhattan-like equivalent, gridlocked by up to 5,000 cars entering each day. In 1913, James Bryce (British Ambassador to the US) warned Americans about the perils of allowing autos into the valley: "If Adam had known what harm the serpent was going to work he would have tried to prevent him from finding lodgment in Eden; and if



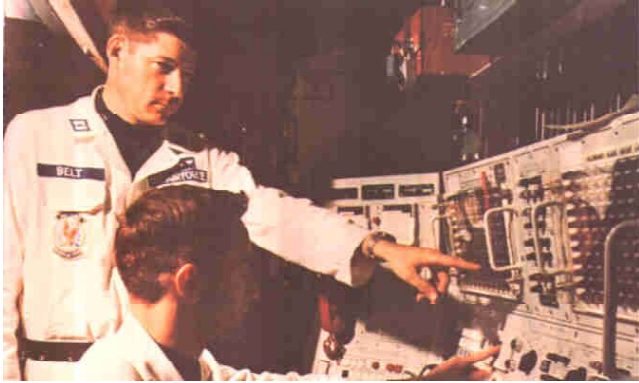
The author in the big trees

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The Mission of the Association of Air Force Missileers -

- Preserving the Heritage of Air Force Missiles and the people involved with them
- Recognizing Outstanding Missileers
- Encouraging Meetings and Reunions
- Keeping Missileers Informed
- Providing a Central Point of Contact for Missileers

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321 SMW Crew in 1966

pline, structured procedures and accountability. If the Air Force had a regulation or a manual on a topic, SAC had many supplements detailing “the SAC way.” And then there were complementing SAC manuals and regs spelling out even more specific rules and procedures. When I entered the Air Force in 1959, AF Manual 66-1, the new maintenance bible, had just come out. AFM 66-1 defined the new centralized maintenance concept, with everything in aircraft maintenance under the deputy commander for maintenance instead of the operations squadron or group commanders. The basic manual was about two inches thick. When I moved from AF Systems Command in aircraft maintenance to SAC in Titan I maintenance, I discovered that my new copy of the manual was twice as thick - the new pages were all SAC supplements. And then we had SAC Manual 66-12 that was a detailed publication for those of us in missile maintenance. We had no doubt what the CinCSAC expected of our maintenance organization.

In SAC, there were several key words - standardization, evaluation, inspection were three very important ones. All of us in a specific system or specialty were expected to do things the same way - standardized - both by manual/regulation and by technical order and checklist. And we had evaluators and inspectors at several levels that made sure we did things that way. Originally, in operations we had the Standardization Board (often called Standboard or stanboard). It later became the Standardization Evaluation Division - but was still called by the same nickname. Standboard crews were “the best”, hand picked by the director of operations or wing commander. Their job was to evaluate the wing instructor and line crews - they did it often and they did it using demanding and stressful scenarios either on site or in simulators. The equivalent in maintenance was the quality control and evaluation division, manned by the best maintainers in each specialty. Their task was the same -

evaluate all of the maintenance teams in the tasks they performed. This part of the equation hasn't changed - crews and maintainers still undergo evaluations on a regular basis.

Since we were in SAC, somebody had to “check the checkers.” The senior standardization crew might be the best in the wing, and the QC and E missile maintenance team members the best in their area - but they had to prove it often. The bomber business had two organizations, the Combat Evaluation Group that looked at bomber and tanker crews and the Maintenance Standardization Evaluation Team that looked at aircraft maintenance folks. In missiles, we had a single squadron that did both. The 3901st Strategic Missile Evaluation Squadron was made up of crewmembers, missile maintenance technicians, munitions technicians, communications technicians and missile civil engineering technicians that were handpicked from the missile wings and squadrons. The 3901 SMES would visit every missile wing (and squadron, in the early Atlas and Titan days) every six months. Most visits were scheduled, but on occasion, the visits were no-notice. A typical 3901 SMES visit involved about 120 evaluators and took almost two weeks, so every missile unit was under SMES evaluation for almost a month of every year.

In Minuteman operations, the 3901st would look at twelve combat crews in the missile procedures trainer (MPT) - usually two full evaluations per day for six days. The evaluators also made visits to the launch control centers for no-notice evaluations of crews on duty, usually six to eight per visit. The MPT evaluations either used evaluation scripts selected from the unit library or used scripts brought by the 3901 SMES evaluators. The 3901st evaluators checked the wing senior crew at least annually - usually it was every visit since crew changes dictated it. A number of the evaluations were over-the-shoulder checks - the 3901st evaluators watching a wing standboard crew checking a wing line crew. During my



3901 SMES Maintenance Evaluation

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Minuteman II Mark II Reentry Vehicle Emplacement

tenure as a 3901st evaluator, we decided to really verify that standardization was "standardized." We would select two wing standboard crews and two wing line crews, and a single wing script. We would conduct one over-the-shoulder immediately followed by the second - and we kept the evaluator and line crews isolated so one couldn't talk to the other either before or after the MPT ride, until both evaluations had been completed and debriefed. On my first visit back to Grand Forks, where I had spent my crew time, the first day we tried this approach took twenty hours. Both line crews made critical launch errors - different mistakes but enough for both to fail, and one of the standboard crews failed to categorize one of the errors as critical. So we had an unqualified standboard crew and two unqualified line crews. It had taken the first standboard crew from noon until three the next morning to determine the outcome of the check, after a six hour long script in the MPT. And they arrived at the wrong decision. My 3901st evaluation partner and I finished the outbrief of the evaluation crew, the chief of standboard and the DO at four, and started the process all over with four more crews three hours later.

Maintenance, munitions, comm and CE were just as detailed - we checked the checkers and we checked the maintainers in many tasks, involving every aspect of missile, reentry vehicle, missile comm and missile CE maintenance. At the end of the almost two week long visit, the 3901st team chief would present a formal briefing, usually in the base theater, on all the programs. In each area, we rated the evaluation, training and administrative programs. Of course, in ops that included the emergency war order and codes training and administration programs. While the crew and team evaluators checked crews and maintenance teams, other evaluators spent several days looking at evaluation and training records, personnel reliability programs, tech order distribution prac-

tices and almost every other aspect of the wing functions. What the 3901 SMES evaluators looked at was not a surprise to the units, since each unit was provided copies of all of the checklists that the 3901st used for every visit to self inspect before the visits. And it was common practice to have a numbered air force (NAF) or division staff assistance team visit a couple of times a year, to give the wing another look that didn't carry the same penalties that an unsatisfactory performance during a 3901st visit did. In those days, the NAF staff was large enough to have a number of qualified and experienced operators and maintainers who could make the SAV meaningful.

It might seem to some that the process described above would be enough to keep a missile wing on the straight and narrow - but the 3901 SMES was only a part of the evaluation and inspection process. The SAC IG (the inspector general team) came to visit at least once a year, too. On a combined missile and bomb base, that could mean a couple of hundred inspectors showing up suddenly - most IG visits were no-notice, especially in the early years. If a wing had done satisfactorily or better on the last visit, they usually had a rough window of when to expect the IG's return. If a wing had failed an operational readiness inspection - something we did often in the early Titan I and Atlas days - we could expect the team to return in about 90 days. Most of the time, the first indication that an ORI was coming was a call to base operations or the tower that a couple of KC-135s or C-97s were "half an hour out with 110 souls on board." But on a few occasions, the first notice was when some unidentified officers showed up at a launch control facility with all the right paperwork to begin an on-site evaluation of the crew down below. IG visits ran a week or so in length - four or five days of intense generation and execution followed by detailed compliance inspections of all the wing functions. In the bomber and tanker business, the inspectors flew on the missions. Initially in missiles, the only crew evaluations were conducted on-site with exercise countdowns. Later, the IG would add MPT evaluations, using two hour scripts developed by the unit and approved by the IG. Like the 3901st, the visit ended with a formal briefing in the base theater.

More than once during my career, I saw wing commanders relieved at the end of the visit due to a wing failure. Except for the early Titan I days, and our very first ORI in Minuteman, I never was in a missile wing that failed, and the CinC and the IG were a little more kind to the folks in new systems when they considered whether to fire the commander or not. But when I was

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at Mountain Home, which had a B-47 wing, and Ellsworth, a B-52 wing, I was present when the senior officer at the briefing, in the second case the Vice CinCSAC, fired the bomb wing commander at the end of the briefing.

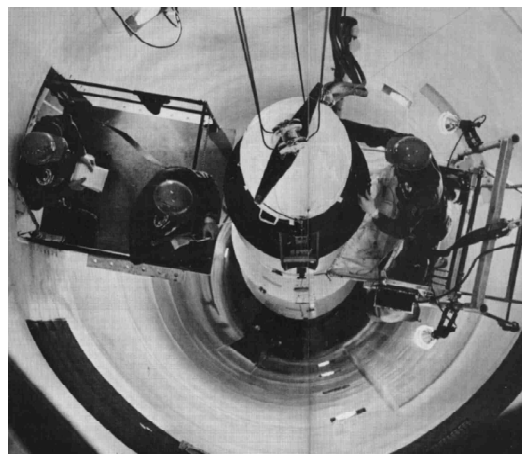
There were some other aspects of the IG/ORI process that put more pressure on the wings. On occasion, the Air Force IG would send several team members along with the SAC IG to see how well they did things. The pressure was on both the unit and the inspectors - they got rated, too. And the SAC IG would visit the 3901 SMES once a year, always at the home office and sometimes during a wing visit. In the early days of missiles, it was common practice to say that any crew that failed was due to an evaluation or training problem. Therefore, not only would the crew fail, but a wing program would be rated less than satisfactory. That attitude was changing by the early 1970s. One year when the IG visited the 3901st, when I was the Minuteman ops team chief, the IG team told us we were unsatisfactory because we had failed crews and not downgraded programs. We argued that the crew failures were strictly due to individual lack of proficiency on the part of each crew - they had been trained properly. Our commander refused to acknowledge the results of the IG visit - and after several weeks, the overall concept was changed - it suddenly became possible for a crew to "just make a mistake" without an entire wing training or evaluation program going down the tubes.

And then, there were the Nuclear Surety Inspections (NSI). Like the ORI, they came about once a year, but there were Limited NSIs in between. The Nuclear Surety folks from Kirtland - a team from all services that had nuclear weapons - would look at every aspect of the nuclear part of the missile and bomber business. They checked security, personnel, PRP, nuclear controls, anything involved with the storage, maintenance, control and use of nukes. The LNSIs were quite often related to a scheduled nuclear component movement. Warheads were routinely transported by air to the depots for aging and surveillance checks, and new ones brought in. When I was a base commander, one of my jobs was to be present during the entire process when a movement occurred. I met the aircraft that was picking up the weapon, oversaw the convoy delivery and loading, and verified that we followed all the procedures involving everything from equipment readiness to overhead reconnaissance. It was not unusual to meet a C-130 or C-141 that had arrived to pick up a weapon and to be met by a Navy, Army or Air Force officer who was a nuclear surety inspector. NSI failures are not new - we failed an occasional one in those days,

too. We failed for serious reasons - when I was at Ellsworth we had some major security police problems for over a year and failed twice. Our cops had a hard time getting the 15 and 5 response correct - they would consistently get five cops on scene in 15 minutes - not a good thing and even worse when they show up on the wrong side of a double chain link fence. Standards were tough then, as they are now - some were almost humorous, except for the fact that the rating was less than satisfactory. I met one incoming aircraft and was really surprised when the Army Lt Col from Kirtland told me we had failed the inspection. The flat bed trailer that was used to move the weapon to the storage area had some moss growing between two of the four by four beams that made up the bed of the trailer - obviously a very unsafe condition.

So we had a lot of inspections to keep us on our toes - but there was more. SAC had a bombing, missile and a weapons loading competition every year. Each of these events contributed significantly to our ability and desire to do things right. The comps were large and at a central location, so missile, bomber, tanker and munitions folks competed head to head in demanding exercise scenarios - and got the results in a big ceremony at the end of the event.

For most of the history of SAC, there was also the "reporting" process. When I first came into the command in 1962, every single aspect of the operation of a base and wing was measured, scored, reported and compared. It was initially called the Management Control System. The CinCSAC and NAF commanders were briefed at least monthly on the standing of every unit. MCS measured the important things - alert rates, aircraft and missile in commission rates, critical parts availability, etc. - but it also measured things like dental appointments missed, overdue library books, profits in officer and en-



RV installation on a Minuteman II - note the checklist in the technician's hand on the left

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listed clubs and almost every other measurable task on a base. Like the results of an ORI, the results of the MCS could be a killer - a commander whose unit was consistently at the bottom in these rating probably was not long for his job. The name of the measurement system changed over the years, but it was just one more thing to make sure we all paid attention to what we were doing.

When you combine all of these activities, it adds up to a whole lot of training and preparation - and a lot of people checking other people to ensure that we all do things the right way. It put a lot of stress on people, it was expensive, it was redundant and it was thorough. People in other commands never understood the need to do things the SAC way - but most of those people were not involved day to day in the care and feeding on nuclear weapons. We lived in an atmosphere that demanded perfection - and the SAC way of life gave us that, or at least as close to it as you can be when humans are involved. There is no doubt that all these programs kept SAC honed and ready to carry out a mission that we never had to execute.

Cooperstown Oscar-0 Update.

Becky J Meidinger, Development Specialist

First, we want to thank AAFM for the \$3000 grant to help with the development of the site and the Cold War Museum project. The ND State Historical Society let bids for the electrical and mechanical projects for the LCF and LF, preceded by cleaning up mold and asbestos. The state is planning to be completed with the upgrades sometime in July of 2009. They will put a sprinkler system in place and make the restrooms handicap accessible.

The Griggs County Historical Society is securing a building very near the current museum that will become the Cold War Museum, and the state has agreed to loan much of their Cold War memorabilia and archives to be shown at this new museum. The county group hopes to have part of this ready for viewing by the time the site is open. The Friends of Oscar-0 group has been organized to raise funds to operate and maintain the site and the museum. They have raised \$65,000 and are recruiting members. To join send a \$15 check for an individual yearly membership or \$500 membership to the Friends of Oscar-0, c/o Griggs County Historical Society, PO Box 242, Cooperstown, ND 58425. The membership includes a free pass to the site and eventually a quarterly newsletter. We are also hiring a part-time person to begin cataloguing memorabilia, developing a website, developing a database of interested people to keep informed, and much more.

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you were to realize what the result of the automobile will be in that wonderful incomparable valley, you will keep it out."¹

Mariposa Grove

I hastily left the traffic, exhaust, noise, and urban amenities of Yosemite Valley behind to quietly explore the snow-shrouded Giant Sequoia forest of Mariposa Grove. Words truly cannot describe the unbelievable breadth and unimaginable beauty of the Yosemite region, nor the grandeur of her Giant Sequoias. Silent sentinels standing ramrod-straight and neck-stretching tall - seemingly immovable goliaths weathering sun, rain, snow and storms for millennia - these ancient monoliths of the Sierra Nevada are some of the largest, oldest living things on earth.

National Parks contributor Laura Hershey may have described them best when she said: "Human bodies seem minuscule here - tiny as toys, as if viewed from a great height - even though I am right here among them, part of this Lilliputian crowd. We all look small, as we meander through the ancient grove. The Giant Sequoia loom like gods. The bodies of their dead sprawl among them."² Sequoias reach full height in their first 800 years, but continue to expand for as long as they live, adding bulk rather than height.

Imagine 150 years ago, chasing a wounded grizzly bear through an Alice in Wonderland-like forest and suddenly encountering the shaggy, cinnamon red trunk of a tree so massive that only with outstretched arms could 16 people encircle it. During 1852, in an area now protected as Calaveras Big Trees State Park, A. T. Dowd, a frontiersman and backwoods hunter from Connecticut, abandoned pursuit of a grizzly and gazed upward at a massive tree that stretched more than 300 feet skyward.³

Nearly two decades earlier, the first published description of Giant Sequoias was written in the journal of Zenas Leonard, a member of the Walker Party's 1833 exploration and fur-trapping expedition in California. However, it wasn't until Dowd's "discovery" in 1852 that the trees received widespread attention. At that time, the "big trees," as Giant Sequoias were known, had received little notice beyond the Native Americans who reportedly revered them.⁴

Some Sequoias are 3,500 years old with diameters greater than 35 feet and heights surpassing that of the Statue of Liberty; taller than a 25-story building. Like Lady Liberty, and the intercontinental ballistic missiles I would soon be trained to launch in the event of a nuclear conflict, these trees were reminders to me of what was at stake in the worldwide struggle for peace and democ-

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*The author
as a crew
member at
Grand Forks*

racy - nothing less than America's democratic birthright; our remaining wild places and wide open spaces.

I knew then more clearly than ever what it was I had devoted the next four years of my life to defend. As Kim Heacox says in *Visions of Wild America*, our tradition of democratic self-government, originally established in England under the weight of hundreds of years of human history and monarchy, was established in America by the force of hundreds of miles. Hundreds of miles of larger-than-life landscapes; horizon-to-horizon wilderness and natural majesty equaled nowhere else in the world.⁵

General Francis Marion, the Revolutionary War's legendary Swamp Fox, wrote in his wartime journals: "I look at the venerable trees around me and I know that I must not dishonor them." History shows that General Marion honored and defended the trees and wildernesses that sheltered his military forays for personal and political freedom. Following in his footsteps, I paid tribute to the silent sentinels of Yosemite on my cross-country journey to begin defending those same freedoms.

As Admiral Hyman G. Rickover said, "Government has as much a duty to protect the land, the air, the water, the natural environment against technological damage, as it has to protect the country against foreign enemies." I knew then, without a doubt, that defending America's freedom and democracy was synonymous with defending the backdrop against which they formed; the wild public lands of this great nation.

Before leaving Mariposa Grove, I stopped for one long last look around. Standing in silent and awed reverence, I felt "the blinding light of human obligation, as if the crosshairs of destiny has settled on my shoulders."⁶ My service to country now had its true purpose. After reporting to Vandenberg and completing four months of UMT, in September I headed for my permanent duty station at Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota.

Minutemen

In the early 1960s, the Air Force decided that eastern North Dakota - sparsely populated and relatively close over the pole to the Soviet Union - was a good place to plant a strange crop: the Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), explains USA Today contributor Rick Hampson. It bought (and in a few cases took) 165 plots in an area west of Grand Forks AFB about the size of New Jersey; it connected them with enough underground cable to reach Hawaii; it built silos 12 feet wide and 10 stories deep.⁷

Each silo contained a missile that could fly several thousand miles in half an hour, carrying nuclear warheads more potent than all the weapons on all sides in World War II. "There is more power in this area than in any other single part of this planet," Col Harold Radetzky proclaimed in 1966, 25 years to the day after Pearl Harbor. "If we seceded," people told one another, "we'd be the world's No. 3 nuclear power."⁸

While assigned to the 321 MW's 446 MS, I completed four years of service as a missile launch officer and missile combat crew commander, not returning to the silent sentinels of the Sierras until after leaving the Air Force four years later.⁹ Grand Forks was home to 150 widely-dispersed Minuteman III ICBMs at the time, also silent sentinels, but ones capable of delivering three nuclear-tipped warheads with pinpoint accuracy to targets thousands of miles away.¹⁰

Although the precise range, accuracy, and targets of our missiles were classified, missileers had an informal slogan: "On time, anywhere in the world in 30 minutes or less, or the next one's free."¹¹ Missile crews generally pulled seven or eight 24-hour alerts a month, during which they drove out to distant Missile Alert Facilities (MAFs), then descended underground some forty feet into steel- and concrete-encased Launch Control Centers (LCCs), where we monitored the well-being of ten to fifty ICBMs.¹²

Since 1959 Air Force missile alert crews have operated the nation's ICBM force, standing ready in LCCs in remote areas of the northern Great Plains. These crews performed flawlessly for over three decades, constantly prepared to execute an order that thankfully never came. Then during late 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed, the Cold War ended, and the ominous nuclear threat declined. As a result, the missiles at Grand Forks were removed from their silos between 1995 and 1998.¹³

"He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into
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Sentinels - (Continued from Page 6)

plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.” Isaiah 2:4¹⁴

Although missileers still stand guard in LCCs under the Great Plains of North Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming, today some of America’s deactivated missile sites have become state and national park sites. Merle Paaverud was raised on a farm outside Finley, ND. He remembers how missile sites in the area were “shrouded in mystery,” explains USA Today contributor Jeff Martin. “Here we were farming around them, raising kids and going to school,” Paaverud, 59, says. “We never really knew what was going on, but it was life and death, part of the chess game that was going on in the world.”¹⁵

One MAF a couple miles north of Cooperstown, ND, is named O-0 (Oscar Zero). Like the 14 other MAFs once in this area, it includes an above-ground building with living and sleeping quarters that were used by security police and maintenance personnel, and an underground LCC, where two missile launch officers were on alert 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Each LCC was linked by buried cables and a radio network to 10 unmanned, underground silos (launch facilities), each containing a missile with its three nuclear warheads.¹⁶

All the Grand Forks ICBMs are gone now, but one missile silo, November-33, survives southeast of Cooperstown. And today Merle Paaverud is the director of the State Historical Society of North Dakota and oversees Oscar-Zero (which is one of the LCCs that I pulled alerts in while serving at Grand Forks AFB) and November-33 launch facility.¹⁷

“A lot of the people who grew up and lived through it are coming back and sort of reexperiencing that time,” says Chris Wilkinson, an interpretive park ranger at the Minuteman Missile National Historic Site in western South Dakota, near Philip, SD. The Cold War, he says, had “a defining and pervasive influence” not only on Americans, but on people throughout the world.¹⁸

**Last Alert**

The last of the missiles assigned to the 321 MG was removed on 3 June 1998. “For 34 years, we have had ICBMs out here in the fields of eastern North Dakota,” said Col Edward Rausch, group commander then. “They stood as a deterrent to any adversary in the world that might consider challenging the peace and freedom that we enjoy. These missiles did their job.”¹⁹

As did the missileers who stood ready to turn keys and launch those missiles in the event of a nuclear conflict. I started my first alert at LCC B-0 on 23 October 23 1991, and completing my last alert on 18 April 1995, at C-0. It was my 266th alert (almost three-quarters of a year spent underground). Ten days later, on 28 April, I drove out the gates of the base after completing my active duty military service commitment and never looked back, trading a career defending freedom for a quest in pursuit of it.²⁰

I left the Air Force and traveled across the North American continent - from Alaska to Mexico, California to Florida, New Mexico to New Jersey - and learned in a way that only unfettered travel allows for. I experienced America as a modern day nomad, not unlike our pioneer forefathers who settled, tamed, and made American into what it is today

Some say America is a great nation today because of economics, which made us collectively rich and militarily powerful. I do not. I say we are still a great nation, despite our currently crumbling economy and stretched-thin military, because of a freedom and democracy that was nurtured by 300 years of frontier wilderness experiences. And we will remain a great nation mostly because of the wilderness that still exist to collectively morph and mold our shared national character.

Historian Frederick Jackson Turner once said that the pioneers were unaware “of the fact that their most fundamental traits, their institutions, even their ideals were shaped by this interaction between the wilderness and themselves. American democracy was born of no theorists dream; it was not carried in the Sarah Constant to Virginia, nor in the Mayflower to Plymouth. It came out of the American forest, it gained new strength each time it touched a new frontier.”²¹

These are the places our ancestors explored, settled, loved and sometimes hated, but eventually helped save and defend through a Revolution, two World Wars, and a decades-long Cold War, although there’s still much work to be done. I cannot comprehend a worthwhile life without those wild places and wide open spaces; places

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like Yosemite's Mariposa Grove and its silent sentinels; places so many Americans throughout history have served our country to protect.

As historian Roderick Nash said, "We cannot teach our children what is special about our history on freeways or in shopping malls...Protecting the remnants of wild country left today is an action that defines our nation. Take away wilderness and you diminish the opportunity to be American."

Footnotes

- 1 David G. Havlick. *No Place Distant*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2002, p.155
- 2 Laura Hershey. "Along Asphalt Trails: Mariposa Grove-Yosemite." *National Parks: Fall 2008*, p.23
- 3 Save-the-Redwoods League. "The Big Trees." *Save-the-Redwoods League: Fall Bulletin, 2002*, p.4
- 4 Save-the-Redwoods League. "The Big Trees." *Save-the-Redwoods League: Fall Bulletin, 2002*, p.4
- 5 Kim Heacox (ed.). *Visions of a Wild America*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1996, p.20
- 6 Mark Jacobson. "the hunt for red gold." *Oearth: Fall 2004*, p.17
- 7 Rick Hampson. "Missile site roars with destruction—its own." *USA Today: 6/19/00*, p.21A
- 8 Rick Hampson. "Missile site roars with destruction—its own." *USA Today: 6/19/00*, p.21A
- 9 Minuteman ICBM combat crew commanders are directly responsible to the President of the United States and the National Command Authorities for up to fifty nuclear weapons and have Top Secret SIOP-ESI security clearances. They command all activities in a 500 square mile area, including a remote MAF manned by eight or more personnel. While assigned to squadron command post duties, combat crew commanders also direct the actions of 4 to 14 other missile crews.
- 10 Air Force Space Command (AFSC) Fact Sheet. "LGM-30G Minuteman III." AFSC: 11/23/98
- 11 John Morgan. "Missileers guard America's ICBMs." *Casper Star-Tribune: 4/22/07*
- 12 Frank Oliveri. "Twilight of the Missileers." *Air Force Magazine: August 1994*, p.25
- 13 Frank Oliveri. "Twilight of the Missileers." *Air Force Magazine: August 1994*, p.24
- 14 Rick Hampson. "Missile site roars with destruction—its own." *USA Today: 6/19/00*, p.21A
- 15 Jeff Martin. "Old missile sites hold Cold War mystique." *USA Today: 12/4/08*, p.3A
- 16 Judy Keen. "N.D. nuke site may reopen as museum." *USA Today: 12/28/06*
- 17 Jeff Martin. "Old missile sites hold Cold War mystique." *USA Today: 12/4/08*, p.3A
- 18 Jeff Martin. "Old missile sites hold Cold War mystique." *USA Today: 12/4/08*, p.3A
- 19 Judy Keen. "N.D. nuke site may reopen as museum." *USA Today: 12/28/06*
- 20 David A. Lien. "Last Alert." *Association of Air Force Missileers (AAFM) Newsletter: December 2005*, p.3
- 21 Doug Scott. *The Enduring Wilderness*. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2004, p.151

What Missileers Did...Part II - More

articles from our members telling us what life was like after missile duty.

Art Alleger, Lt Col (Ret), MbrNo A0007, Rapid City, SD. Art was an MCCC in the 455/91 SMW at Minot and commanded the crew that launched Glory Trip 01GM in 1971. He served on the missile staff at 1 Strad, until he became Chief of Morale, Welfare and Recreation at Vandenberg in 1977. He became the MWR Chief at Ellsworth (your executive director was his boss), and retired in 1983 after 22 years of service. He then worked for state of South Dakota for 17 years as Director of Residence Life at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. He retired again in 2001 to play golf as much as possible, though he was slowed down by a stroke in 2007. Recovery has been steady helped by daily walks preferably outside but in the mall when the temperature is low and snow covers sidewalks. He and his wife Joanne, who retired after 33 years of elementary teaching, have enjoyed recent visits to see his daughter and 4 grandchildren who recently relocated to Houston area after 6 years overseas. Her husband is mechanical engineer with 3 years in Saudi Arabia (Art and Joanne visited twice) and 3 more in Paris (3 visits). His son remains single and is in Rapid City.

Ron Buchert, Col (Ret), MbrNo A1460, Tampa, FL. After I retired from the Air Force I was working as the Director of Admin Services at the University of Tampa when I received a call from the MacDill AFB installation commander. He said that he wanted me to head an effort to raise the necessary funds and construct an aircraft memorial park on the base. I agreed to do this and thus began a 5 year project that gave me the honor and pleasure of meeting numerous veterans with interesting and often heroic stories of their military service, many civic leaders, some frustrations, and ultimately the gratification of accomplishing something that was meaningful and worthwhile. It's not possible to be exact but I estimate that our total fund raising effort including cash and in-kind donations of approximately \$250,000. The installation commander gave us not only his personal support but that of many others especially the base legal office, the civil engineering squadron, and the public affairs office. The first steps were to establish a name (MacDill Memorial Park Foundation), complete the legal requirements, and prepare a drawing of the park. A local architect provided the drawing gratis and an AF Reserve JAG officer filed for our IRS 501 (C) (3) status, sales tax exemption certificate, and numerous other legal requirements.

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MacDill's history goes back to 1940 and WW II and includes serving as a training command, SAC, and TAC base. Base aircraft over the years have included the B-26, B-29, B-47, KC-97, F-4, F-16, and KC-135. It would have been nice to have had the space to display one of each of those aircraft but the planned location had limited space. We already had a MacDill F-4 on display on the base and we moved quickly and were able to get an F-16 from a another base that was changing aircraft models. From the office of the AF Historian we learned that the AF Museum at Wright Patterson AFB had a KB-50, which is a variant of the B-29, that we could have. We leaped on the offer and soon a convoy of trucks carrying a disassembled tanker/bomber arrived, along with a crew to put the plane back together. One of our early steps had been to get the Secretary of the Air Force to accept the planned park so the aircraft could remain in the Air Force inventory and be cost-free to us. Our park would face the beautiful but infamous bay of the WW II saying "One a day in Tampa Bay." We felt that this reference to the many crashes in the bay was an appropriate way to pay tribute to the heroism of military personnel killed while serving their country. The flag display was to include the American, State of Florida, City of Tampa, and POW/MIA flags and be a memorial to veterans from all of the military services. I spoke about the park to any group that expressed interest and was willing to make a donation. We received cash donations from many veterans organizations, civic clubs, local chambers of commerce, and of course many veterans. The mayor of Tampa promised us trees, shrubbery, and landscaping services when we were ready. One of our most successful fund raising efforts was an ongoing sale of engraved paver bricks at \$100 each. The bricks were to be placed at the base of the flag display. A tombstone engraver gave us a great price to engrave the pavers and then personally set the bricks himself at no charge to us. Veterans commemorated their military service and numerous family members honored their husbands, fathers, brothers, sisters, and others. Most people had bricks engraved with the member's name, service, rank, and a significant personal military activity. We also had more than one "World's greatest fighter pilot" engraved on a brick. In the beginning we thought that the project would require about three years but we soon learned that this was overly optimistic. After about four and a half years things were moving at a snail's pace when the current MacDill commander called me. He asked what could he do to help get the park completed before the upcoming annual Corona Confer-

ence (4 star generals meeting) to be held at MacDill in February, three months away. I said that our primary needs were electrical wiring, water, landscaping, and labor to get things set up. Needless to say all of these things started rolling our way and in a flurry of activity we were ready for our dedication in January. The ceremony was well attended not only by senior military officers and civic leaders but also by many veterans and family members who came to see their bricks. The park now serves as a popular setting for changes of command, retirement, reenlistment, award and medal presentations and other patriotic ceremonies.

Walt Greene, PHD, Capt (Ret), Mbr No A0512, Edinburgh, TX. I enlisted in the US Army 27 August 27 1947, trained as a teletype operator by the 59 Air and Airways Communications Service (AACS) Wing in Anchorage, the Territory of Alaska. From there they sent me to the Pentagon Teletype center where the system went from individual tapes to a continuous tape system. From there AACS sent me to NATO in Weisbaden, Germany in 1951 for their teletype center where I served as station chief until my transfer to the 1807 AACSW in Furstenfeldbruck, By then I had progressed to TSgt and was under consideration for MSgt when I was accepted for OCS Class 1956B. Since my enlisted service had been communications, the AF sent me first to Communications Officer school at Scott AFB, IL and after a short tour in Aircraft Control and Warning (ACW) they sent me to Radar Electronics school in Keesler AFB, MS. On graduation I was assigned to Bellefontaine AFS, OH, and then to the 711 ACW Squadron in Cape Lisbourne, AK in 1961 (State of Alaska this time and North of the Arctic circle). When I got orders for 741 SMS, 455 SMW at Minot in 1963, all the crew in Alaska kidded me by saying, well, you are going South. After graduation with my MBA in May 1967, I retired on 1 Sept 67 with 20 years and 4 days active duty as a captain. My first civilian job was as business manager of Mount Senario College in Ladysmith, WI. From there, I discovered I needed a PhD to progress in higher education as an instructor. I taught at South East Missouri, the University of Arkansas and North East Oklahoma State colleges while getting my PhD. My first position after getting that advanced degree was back in Minot teaching in the same MBA program where I had obtained my own degree ten years earlier. At that time the students attempted to tell me I didn't understand what they had to do in the LCCs - that is until they found out my prior 741 SMS history. After that I taught for six years in Middle Tennessee State until

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we discovered my first wife Ruth had cancer. We moved to the University of Texas Pan American in 1985 so she would have warm weather in her final years. She passed away in December 1999 just three weeks before our 50th wedding anniversary. While at UTPA, I spent several summer sessions teaching classes and lecturing in Chihuahua, Mexico City, Puebla & Tehuacan Mexico. I got those assignments because I do not know Spanish and the Mexican schools wanted their students to be more proficient in English. I met my second wife two years later and we were married in 2004. I retired from college teaching as a full professor on 1 September 2005 and currently am President of Greene and Associates, Management Advisers, and trying to keep busy doing all those honeydoo's my wife finds for me.

Ken Hollinga, Col (Ret), MbrNo A0975, Lompoc, CA. Because of the on-going draft, involuntary enlistment in the Army and an all expense paid trip to Viet Nam was looming on my personal horizon after college. I decided to beat Uncle Sam to the punch by volunteering for a commission in the Air Force - my version of draft dodging. The Air Force trained me to become a Weapons Controller and assignments followed in rapid succession to Klamath Falls, OR, Cheju-Do, Korea, Naha, Okinawa, Battle Creek, MI and Monkey Mountain, Viet Nam. While in Viet Nam, Karen and I decided that I would stay in the Air Force and also change career fields. I applied and was accepted for missile duty. My first assignment in missiles was to the 10 SMS at Malmstrom where I served as a missile combat crew commander, and eventually as the Senior Standardization Crew Commander for the Wing. I served in the 3901 SMES, Strategic Plans at the Pentagon, McConnell commanding the 532 SMS, the 351 SMW as the Director of Operations and Vice Wing Commander, and then I returned to Vandenberg as the Chief of Staff and then Vice Commander, and finally as the first Vice Commander of the newly reactivated 20 AF, retiring in 1992. After nine months of extended travel following retirement, Karen and I finally settled down in a home we already owned in northern Virginia. My intention was to permanently retire, however, by that time my birding (bird watching) skills had become widely recognized and the American Birding Association asked me to manage their Conference and Convention programs for them. They made me an offer I couldn't refuse - the pay was lousy, but I would be given the opportunity to travel (all expenses paid) to prime birding locations all over North America (and also several trips to Costa Rica). The opportunity to be compensated for pur-

suing my hobby was just too good to pass up, and so for the next eight years I traveled and watched birds, working out of my home when not on the road managing meetings. In 2004, I retired (again) and Karen and I decided we would move back to Lompoc. Karen works part-time as a Sales Associate at The Mole Hole, an upscale gift shop in Solvang. I keep busy around the house and find time to work on a few volunteer projects. I also enjoy pursuing various hobbies including birding, fishing, cooking, and gardening. Although Karen and I have already visited all 50 states, we still travel often, making numerous trips each year to visit family and some of the many friends we have living at scattered locations around the country. Santa Barbara County has become a prime wine grape growing region in recent years - at last count we have 91 premium wineries in the immediate area. Karen and I feel compelled to sample the bounty of the local harvest regularly - we like to think of it as a community service. Life is good.

Terry Karselis, MbrNo A2140, Chesterfield, VA. I enlisted for the first time in 1956 and after basic training in San Antonio spent a year training in Microwave Radio at Keesler AFB. The remaining 3 years I spent in France working in Microwave radio in Bordeaux and Fontainebleau (AIRCENT/AAFCE). After a year as a civilian I reenlisted in 1961 and was retrained at Sheppard AFB as an Atlas F Missile Launch Control Tech. I then spent three years at Walker AFB in the 579 SMS working on Launch Control Equipment and Blast Control Equipment at all 12 sites. I left the service in 1964 to attend the University of Buffalo where I received my BS (Medical Technology - 1967) and MS (Pathophysiology & Biophysics - 1973). From 1967 until 1999 I taught first at the University of Buffalo (10 years), followed then by the Medical College of Virginia (22 years). During that time I was lucky enough to write and publish 3 texts on Medical Instrumentation - due in part to the electronics training I received in the USAF. Upon retiring in 1999 I became a full time sculptor (a life long hobby became a vocation) and since then have completed commissions for the US Army Historical Foundation as well as the US Marine Corps University, and numerous State Police organizations. In 2007 I was lucky enough to be interviewed by the History Channel in a program they did on the cold war. In 2008 I assisted in the creation of the 579th SMS memorial plaque placed at the Roswell Air terminal.

Roger Lippold, a former Sgt, MbrNo A2209, Brooklyn Center, MN. Roger served as a missile maintenance technician in the 91 SMW at Minot from 1964 to

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1968. Over the next 38 years he worked as a designer, technical writer, sales representative, trainer and senior system design consultant, leading teams on major data and voice communication projects, computer network development and other projects and applications for several Fortune 500 companies. During those 38 years, he worked for EMR Computer and Data 100 in Minneapolis, Modular Computer Systems in Atlanta, Data General Computer Systems, Univac and AT and T in Minneapolis. In 2006 he retired and spends his time playing racquetball, trap shooting, taking motorcycle trips and as a volunteer member of the Golf Memorial Rifle Squad Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

Raymond Melberg, Lt Col (Ret), MbrNo A0910, Lake Forest, CA. After seven years at the 390 SMW and 7 years in GLCM beginning in 1982 at the Tomahawk Cruise Missile System Management Office at HQ TAC, Langley AFB and ending at 501 TMW, Greenham Common, I cast about for something in the civilian world after 23 years military experience and an MBA. I was deeply interested in engineering. System Safety seemed a logical choice, but in 1989 there were 14,000 unemployed aerospace engineers in California. My attention turned to industrial safety. After two years in a small safety consulting firm, I moved to the national insurance industry (The Kemper) where I advised US and international companies on injury prevention, safety training and discipline, risk prevention management and risk financing. It was a pretty good fit with my military experience reckoning that 90% of nuclear warfare is weapon safety, security and disaster preparedness; though candy manufacturing, farm safety, chemical safety and international toy manufacture would not have struck me the place to look for work when the USAF door closed behind me.

Jim Oty, SMSgt (Ret), MbrNo A0409, Socorro, NM. I joined the Air Force in 1955 and, after completing basic training and technical school, I spent my first four years as a Radio Maintenance Tech. In 1959, after reenlisting, I was sent to Vandenberg AFB to retrain as a Missile Instrumentation Tech. I was initially assigned to the 704th Instrumentation Squadron and then to various other outfits as the 1 MD was reorganized. My job was to install and operate the Instrumentation and Destruct systems on all missiles launched from VAFB. During my 6½ years at Vandenberg, I worked on all of the missiles - Thor, Atlas (D, E, F), Titan I and II, and the Minuteman. I was in the blockhouse for several milestone launches. The first Atlas E (exploded on the pad), the first Atlas F

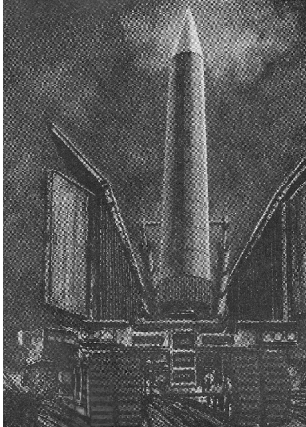
the only Titan I launched from inside a silo (SLTF) and 35 of the first 36 Minuteman Launches (I missed the first one). After Vandenberg I went to Hanscom Field and worked as a Research Instrumentation Tech in the Terrestrial Science Lab of AFCRL. I spent the last 5 1/2 years of my Air Force career at Kirtland AFB in the Laser Division of the Air Force Weapons Lab. I retired in 1975 and went to work with the National Radio Astronomy Observatory as an electronics tech on the Very Large Array radio telescope project near Socorro, NM. I stayed with that project until it was operational and then transferred to the Very Long Baseline Array where I was the Installation Supervisor for all telescope electronics. After 25 years with NRAO, I retired and live in Socorro with my wife, Alice, of 51 years. We golf, travel in our RV, try to spend at least one month a year in Newfoundland with my wife's family, and just enjoy our retired life.

Joe Thornell, CMSgt, MbrNo A2179, Montgomery, AL. Joe served in Minuteman, 1978-1987 as a pneumatics specialist at the 341 SMW and at the 394 ICBMTMS. He competed in Olympic Arena in 1979 and 1982. He met his wife Kerry in Great Falls and they were married in 1980 and their son Joe Jr was born in 1981. Second son Ryan was born at Vandenberg in 1985. After leaving active duty as a TSgt in 1987, Joe joined the California ANG and became an aircraft fuel systems specialist working on F-4s at March AFB. He served with the California ANG until 1993 when he transferred to the South Dakota ANG to work with F-16s in Sioux Falls. While in California, he worked for Northrop Grumman as a technical writer on the B-2 bomber and completed his education to become an elementary school teacher. Joe and Kerry moved to Dell Rapids, SD in 1993, where Kerry's family had a farm. They assumed operation of the farm in 1994 and Joe worked as an elementary teacher and continued in the ANG. In 1997 he became the assistant principal of St. Mary's Catholic School and in 1998 became the principal. In 1999, Joe was promoted to Chief and became the SD State Headquarters Chief and in 2001 Command Chief Master Sergeant for South Dakota. Life changed again for Joe and Kerry in 2003 when Joe was recalled to active duty to serve as the Commandant for Enlisted PME for the ANG at McGhee Tyson ANGB, Tennessee. They enjoyed that position until 2006 when he became the first ANG enlisted member selected for an Air Force nominative Chief position as the Superintendent of the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) at Maxwell AFB. In 2008, he was chosen to be CCAF's first enlisted Vice Commandant and enjoys that

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position today. Joe recently volunteered to serve as a deployed Air Expeditionary Group Superintendent and was in Kuwait and Southern Iraq for 6 months. Both Joe and Kerry have connected with many friends from Malmstrom and Vandenberg over the years and know that their "missile years" were some of the finest in their lifetimes. They plan to return to Dell Rapids after Joe retires in 2013.



An MMRBM concept from a 1959 Air Force Magazine ad

MMRBM -WS 325A

- by Jim Baker, A2579, Cary, NC

I always wanted to work in the aerospace industry. Graduating from high school shortly after the Sputnik era sparked my interest. In 1962 before graduating from the University of Michigan, I was selected for Air Force OTS. However, during a campus interview, The Boeing Company made me an offer difficult to refuse. That prompted a letter to the Air Force stating that I couldn't make it to my assigned OTS class and a call to Boeing saying, "here I come." Boeing, in 1962, was in a huge buildup phase and was bringing folks in from all over the country. Of course, the aircraft division was the main focus. However, I joined the missile division as a production planner. My responsibility was to follow a "black instrumentation package" through the manufacturing and quality control process. Ironically, The Air Force plant rep was part of the process.

This wasn't an exciting job. My desk was in an old WW II warehouse with hundreds of other engineers, planners and secretaries. Desks were lined up row upon row for at least half the length and breath of a football field. After three months, I concluded this wasn't for me and I fired off a letter to the Air Force asking for a reinstatement to OTS. Fortunately, the Air Force agreed and I was slated to attend OTS 63-E at Lackland AFB in November of 1962.

Everyone has stories of their initial foray into the military, whether it be OCS, OTS, ROTC or the Acad-

emy. I was at Lackland, housed in what? Old WW II barracks! OTS also had folks at Medina annex. The rumor at the time was: Medina was rough and tough. I never really found out. Our barracks had fellows from all over the US and a podiatrist we called Doc was a great asset to our squadron! We all hacked it, with only a few SIE's (self inflicted eliminations). Getting close to graduation, we got our assignments: some folks to pilot training, others to Sweetwater and Rockport, TX and a host of far flung bases. And I got my first choice; Did that ever happen? I was assigned to Ballistic Systems Division, Norton AFB, CA, the perfect place, I thought, for a rookie 2nd Lt from Michigan.

I lost track of most of my OTS mates. One I do remember was Herb (Ben) Ringsdorff, from Dothan, Alabama. Herb, become a F-4 pilot, was shot down over North Vietnam and was a long term POW. I found a POW bracelet with Ben's name on it and still have it. After his release, Herb entered medical school and became a fine doctor in Alabama. Sadly, Herb passed away in 1998. (www.pownetwork.org).

Norton in the early 60s was designated as SBAMA (San Bernardino Air Material Area). With plenty of old warehouses, there was enough space for Ballistic Systems Division to relocate from El Segundo just before I arrived at Norton. BSD had many folks moving from Los Angeles and San Diego. The civilian GS types moved north, since the Atlas program was phasing out at Convair in San Diego.

Arriving on base in February 1963, I found minimal facilities, an outdated BOQ on the east end of the base and a somewhat newer motel style BOQ on the main base area. Most of us new arrivals couldn't wait to move off base into apartments.

BSD was in a mammoth block long warehouse not far from the main gate. Within the building were the System Program Offices (SPOs) for the various weapon

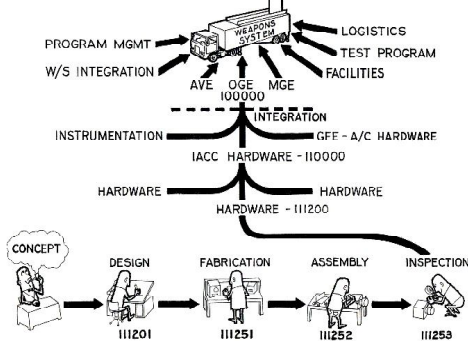


Another MMRBM concept from a 1959 Air Force Magazine ad

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Lewis Site - (Continued from Page 12)

MMRBM Development flow



systems: Atlas, Titan, Minuteman and my initial assignment, the Mobile Mid-Range Ballistic Missile (MMRBM). The SPOs managed weapon system research/development and acquisition. We interfaced directly with the contractors to develop design and production schedules as well as manage the funding to bring the system to operational status.

The SPO director was Col Edmund O'Connor (later Lt Gen). I got to know Col O'Connor fairly well for a wet-behind-the-ears Lieutenant. My boss, Lt Col Frank Smith, and he were good friends from ASD days. Almost all of the senior officers entered the service in WW II and we all had the benefit of being somewhat connected to that era.

The MMRBM was developed to be a transportable missile on an on-road semi-type trailer. Primary deployment was Germany. The concept was for the tractor-trailer to roam throughout Germany with pullout areas where the missile would be erected, align its navigation system and be ready to launch. The MMRBM SPO was comprised of several divisions. Each division was responsible for a segment of the missile system. The divisions were headed by a Lt Col and were a combination of GS folks and military. My division was Integration, Assembly and Checkout (IAC). My AFSC 6521, Production Officer.

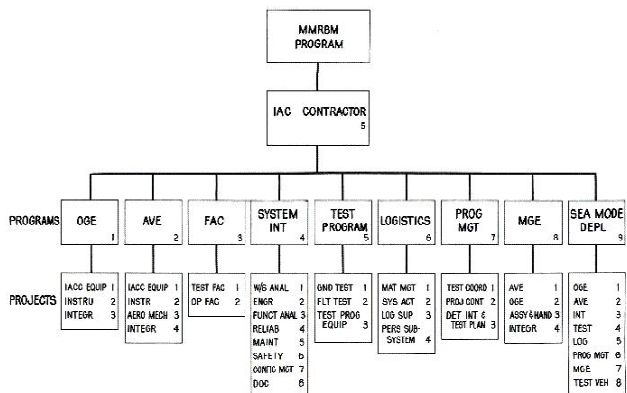
The IAC contractor was Hughes Aircraft Corporation in Culver City. IAC was the largest division since we were to deliver the completed system. Since this was an R&D program, the majority of our effort was in managing the development within the AFSCM 375 procedures. Along with all of the documentation came the infamous "PERT" Charts. Being in the R&D phase, we had no real hardware except for a Lowenbrau truck mock-up from Hughes, (remember: this being deployed in Germany!). I believe the contractors at that time were somewhat imaginative. BSD was the R&D manager, Aero-

space Corporation the technical and scientific advisor to the SPO's. Aerospace Corp. continues in this role to the Air Force. Other contractors were Goodyear (Launch Tube), General Precision (Guidance and Control), Martin (Command and Control), Thiokol (Propulsion), Aeronutronics (Reentry System). The IAC took place at Air Force Plant 44, Tucson, Arizona. As Hughes Aircraft was the IAC contractor, many trips were made to Culver City and El Segundo to manage Hughes and its work efforts. The final outcome depended on the people and, for the most part, they were top-notch both at the contractor and Air Force level. However, there was some impropriety at Hughes prior to my arrival at BSD. My boss and I took a fast and immediate trip to correct the problem.

Most of the young lieutenants were anxious to play an active role in our new assignments. We were fortunate that the senior officers were excellent mentors. Lts Don Schnicker, Larry Lapin and Dan Bohan remain friends after all these many years. Dan Bohan was the expert in DD 1423 (Contract Data Requirements List). Dan became the main implementer of this document both within BSD and Systems Command. Dan was always on the road between Norton and Andrews, simply because he stepped up and took a job no one else wanted. In reality, he created his position and ran his own little shop.

Of course, not every program reaches operational status. Although we believed we were developing a good system, the Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara canceled the MMRBM in 1964. For nearly two years, this program was a rewarding learning experience, both of the Air Force and weapon system acquisition. Perhaps the MMRBM was in some way a forerunner to the GLCM in the 1980s.

Next Chapter: a short time in a TMMRMB feasibility study and a new assignment in the Advanced Ballistic Re-Entry Systems (ABRES) SPO.



MMRBM SPO Organization Chart

A Word from the Association

Newsletter - Electronic Version or Print? - this is the first issue for our new electronic newsletter - almost 400 members have opted for this version, saving us a substantial amount in printing and postage costs that we can apply to our grant and award programs. Each quarter, we'll send an email to members who have opted for the E-version, providing an access code and password. They will have access to a full color version about three or four weeks before the mailed copy arrives. The E-version will only be provided to members whose dues are current. Email us at aafm@afmissileers.org and we will add you to the E-version list.

2008 Finances - Total income was \$42,363, \$34,714 in dues, \$6,399 in donations and \$1,250 from investments. Expenses totaled \$48,185, \$17,906 for grants and awards, \$16,507 in newsletter printing and mailing and \$12,207 in office/administrative expenses. This was higher than normal due to trips to Dayton twice for AF events and the 564 MS closing in Great Falls. We also spent more than normal on new displays and computers, the model project and some National Meeting expenses that will apply to future meetings, so weren't part of the cost of the October 2008 meeting. While we took in \$5,822 less than we spent, we carried forward \$5,698 from 2007, so we were \$124 short of breaking even.

Tucson 2010 - We have signed a contract for our hotel for the 2010 National Meeting in Tucson, the Radisson near the airport. It is an all suite hotel, and room rates will be then same as last year (and the previous two meetings), \$89 per night including breakfast for two. We will start on Wednesday, 6 October with our welcome reception. On Thursday, we will tour the Titan Museum and Davis Monthan mission areas, with dinner at the hotel that night. Friday will include local area attractions or a golf tourney. Friday evening, we will tour the Pima Air Museum, including the boneyard, and have dinner there. Saturday will include general and board meetings, optional tours and our banquet with featured speaker. Registration forms will be in the September issue.

Letters to the Association

Address your letters to AAFM, Box 5693, Breckenridge, CO 80424, or send by e-mail to aafm@afmissileers.org. Letters may be edited to fit - content/meaning will not be changed.

Col Lipscomb - I was saddened to read of the passing of Col (Ret) Charles Lipscomb, who was my wing commander at 91 SMW during the late 70s. Col Lipscomb was not only a great commander, but a great human being as well, and treated the enlisted personnel as well as officers under his command with great respect. He was by far the greatest wing commander I ever served under. My condolences to his family and colleagues! *Stephen D. Jarrett (former Sgt), MbrNo A2493, Kingston, GS*

551 SMS Bench - We will be dedicating a bench at the Veterans Memorial Park in Lincoln, NE. The bench is like the one we placed at the museum in Dayton. *Don Luther, MbrNo A2622, Plymouth, IN*

Atlas 564 SMS Member - I was recently contacted by a friend who is looking for information about her father, Robert E. Fox. The only real info I have is that he entered service in 1955 and in 1960 served under then Maj John E Merriman, LCO, Crew, 564 SMS (ICBM-ATLAS), 706 SMW, at Warren AFB. She is interested in finding pictures of her dad during his Air Force service. Can you help me find some unit history that may have pictures or perhaps another Airman that served with Mr. Fox? *Wayne Hagie wandbonthekenai@gci.net*

Malmstrom Movie - About 6 years ago I asked you for some help in finding an 8mm movie that was made at Malmstrom in 1966. I am still looking - the details: I was a 10 SMS crew member 1963-1968. We made a movie spoofing Batman and Robin defending a missile silo. The wing commander and SAC Hq gave us permission to do the filming and it was shown at one or more of our wing get-togethers. Eight copies were passed out to participants and others. "SATMAN" (Security Alert Team) and his sidekick "BLOBIN" (Robin) were dispatched from
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AAFAM is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. The Newsletter is published quarterly, printed by Leesburg Printing, Leesburg, FL.

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an LCF in response to a security alarm at an LF. We used LF A-11, a training site at the time. My four door 1928 Model A was used as the strike vehicle. When we arrived, we found a penetrator dressed in black climbing out of the silo. He had a large "K" on his costume that represented his name "FLUSH, THE KRAPPER". SATMAN and BLOBIN fought with him for a while and finally brought him under custody. During the fight scene, we inserted a variety of visual sounds on the screen like "POW", WHAM" "OUCH" etc. Capt Carmen Parella (I believe he was killed in Viet Nam) was "FLUSH", Capt Bill Leland was SATMAN and I was BLOBIN. Capt Bill Bottoms and I portrayed the crew on alert and I'm not sure who any of the other players might have been. We drove the car to the site as SATMAN and BLOBIN clung to the running boards waving their arms. With a larger AAFM distribution list, we might be able to find a copy of the film. *Col (Ret) Joe Lazzaro, MbrNo L0011, Sequim, WA, 253-288-0450, zardo@comcast.net*

Warren Atlas Tours - If you have members who would be interested in visiting what remains of Atlas Site 4, at Warren; the City of Cheyenne will be starting guided tours of the Belvoir Ranch (to include the site) starting in mid-May or early June (weather depending). People are welcome to give me a call. *Chuck) Lanham, 307-637-6283. email clanham@cheyennecity.org*

Project Emily - I was asked to help the BBC on a radio documentary about the Cuban Missile Crisis. They were initially looking at how RAF Bomber Command reacted to the events. I provided material I had gathered together with correspondence I had from two AAFM members, Tom Hafner and Doug Ray. She also spoke to a number of other RAF Thor personnel. Then things went quiet! In due course the programme was broadcast with absolutely no mention of the Thors at all. There were a few reminiscences from RAF V-bomber crews, details

of plans to take art treasures to deep underground storage and what members of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) did. Thor guys were again frustrated at the lack of recognition of the achievements of the RAF Thor squadrons. My book is sold out but they are looking at a reprint. I have a few signed copies left (\$25 including postage). *John Boyes, MbrNo SA070, Kent, UK*
Contact AAFM if you would like to order a copy from John

50 Years of ICBM Alert - by Col (Ret)

Charlie Simpson, AAFM Executive Director

When you try to decide when to celebrate the birthday of the intercontinental ballistic missile, it's hard to pin down a specific event to commemorate. In May 2004, your AAFM president, Jay Kelley, gave a stirring presentation at our Omaha National Meeting titled "50 Years of ICBMs", and we printed the text of his talk in the June 2004 issue of the newsletter. Over the years, we have commemorated the first Atlas "blue suit" launch with an article in the October 1994 newsletter - it happened fifty years ago this September. In the September 2007 issue, we covered a meeting in San Diego of Atlas pioneers celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first Atlas launch. We also commemorated the stand-up of the first Atlas squadron, the 564 SMS, which was activated in June 1958.

This year, 20th Air Force and Air Force Space Command are commemorating "50 Years of ICBMs" based on the date of the first missile combat crew alert - in other words, fifty years of strategic missiles providing a part of the nuclear deterrent posture of the United States. The February 2009 issue of High Frontier, the AFSPC journal, features a series of articles about the history and future of the ICBM. There are several events planned for later this year to commemorate the "birth" of the ICBM.

Each one of you who was involved in the early days of the strategic missile force has some important date that you look at as the start - and it all depends on what your involvement was. For the folks who were involved in the earliest days - the name "Atlas" was picked in January 1951 by a small group of Convair engineers working on contract MX-1593, involving Charlie Bossart and William Patterson, it was then, or maybe later in the Western Development Division under General Schriever, when Convair and Martin were working on the two first designs, Atlas and Titan. For others, it was that first launch attempt, Atlas A 56-6741 at Cape Canaveral on 11 June 1957, destroyed after 25 seconds - or maybe it was the first successful launch in December that year, Atlas A 56-9749, that flew a full scheduled 600 nautical miles. For

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some it was the emplacement of the first missile in one of the gantries at Vandenberg. For those "blue suiters" at Vandenberg on 9 September 1959, it was the lift-off of Atlas D 57-2630 from Site 576 A-2, nicknamed Desert Heat and recorded in the launch history as a "Initial Operational Capability SAC Launch." The bird flew 3,899 nautical miles to its target near Wake Island, and was a success.

For others, it was the 22 April 1960 launch of Atlas D 58-2196, the first launch from a coffin and not a gantry. In any case, there have been many significant milestones in the development of the systems many of us have worked on over the years.

The 576 SMS at Vandenberg was activated on 1 April 1958 and the first missile, according to the SAC history, "From Snark to SRAM", was on alert with a nuclear warhead on 31 October 1959. During 1958, all three Atlas D squadrons were activated, the 564 SMS at Warren on, 1 July, the 565 SMS at Warren on 1 December and the 566 SMS, which was later redesignated the 549 SMS, at Offutt on 15 August 1959.

Over the next several months, we will reach the 50th anniversary of many other important events in ICBM history. Titan I followed shortly behind Atlas, and Titan II and Minuteman I were not far behind. When AAFM meets for its 2012 National Meeting in Great Falls, Montana, we will be commemorating the 50th anniversary of the first Minuteman alert. Ten missiles in the 10 SMS, the "Aces in the Hole," were quickly brought onto alert during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Those of us who were serving in the brand new Atlas and Titan I units were just beginning to "walk" with our new weapon systems, when we suddenly went to the highest level of nuclear alert in our history. All of us serving in late 1962 learned a whole lot in a very short time about some very complex missile systems.

So no matter when you first got involved in the missile business, you were part of some important events. Some of you were part of some real milestones in systems before we "went ballistic" with duty in Matador and Snark, or maybe in a defensive system like BOMARC or an air-launched system like Rascal or Skybolt, or one of the new smaller tactical air-launched missile systems.

In the June issue, we will include a list that isn't every important event relating to ICBMs (or some of the other systems in the separate articles that follow), but it gives you an idea about some of the steps we took over the last 50 years. The list is also posted on our web page in the Preserving History section.

Reunions

351 SMW Maintenance Reunion, 16-17 May 2009, Whiteman AFB, MO. Contact Bill McEachern, 970-493-1006, mrwilliam44@comcast.net or Ken (Archie) Bunker at 660-826-4183.

485 TMW (Florennes), 4-7 June 2009, Florennes, Belgium, contact John Rudzianski, jrudz@epix.net or write to 485th TMW Alumni Association, P O Box 339, South Montrose PA 18843-0339

556 SMS (Plattsburgh Atlas), August, 2009 at Plattsburgh, NY. Contact Bruce Raleigh, braleigh@wideopenwest.com. or Albert Matzat, at amatzat@comcast.net.

Nuclear Weapons Technician Association, 8-10 May 2009, Albuquerque, NM. For info www.usafnukes.com or rrieker2@comcast.net

OCS CLASS 56B Reunion, 13-18 June 2009 at the Cobblestone Inn, in Branson, MO, contact Glynn McCoy at gmccoy22@centurytel.net or 210-573-6413.

OCS Class 58A, Sep. 14-17, Las Vegas, NV. Contact Mort Friedlander, 702-6745 1288, or mortnsal@cox.net.

TAC Missileers, 15-18 July 2009, Dayton, OH, contact Joe Perkins - Perkster@fcol.com

Association of Air Force Missileers - 6-10 October 2010, Radisson Airport in Tucson we are encouraging units or other groups looking at a reunion to consider joining us - we make all the arrangements, help you get the word out and make sure you have meeting space or fill any other special requirements. Contact us soon if you want to join us - registration in the September issue.

Get notices in early - they'll be posted on our web page, monthly email updates and newsletter.

Taps for Missileers

Capt Jonathan Bayless, an AAFM Life Member, was serving in the 91 MW at Minot

Col (Ret) Bob O. Beaudro, an AAFM member, served in Atlas in the 551 SMS and lived in San Antonio, TX
Howard L. Douthit, was in Minuteman, including the 90 SMW and US Atlantic Command and lived in Chesapeake, VA

Col (Ret) Charles Lipscomb, an AAFM Member, served in Minuteman in the 90 SMW and commanded the 91 SMW and lived in Madison, AL

Richard M. Shute served in 4 ACCS and lived in Colorado Springs, CO

MSgt (Ret) John Elton Smith, an AAFM Member, served in Titan I in the 569 SMS and lived in Montgomery, AL