



### Curtain Raiser to Guardian Challenge



1967 Evaluators

### CURTAIN RAISER-The First Missile Competition -

by CMSgt (Ret) Bob Kelchner, AAFM Treasurer, Mbrno L0014

Curtain Raiser, 3-7 April 1967 - It only seems like last week that I was in training to compete in SAC's first Missile Combat Competition named Curtain Raiser. Just a short 35 years ago this April. The Missile Competition was a logical outgrowth of other competitions like William Tell and SAC's Bombing Competition. I had been a B-47 Radar technician at McCoy AFB, Orlando, Florida during the 1957-58 Bombing Competition. But, not experienced enough then to be on the competing maintenance team. I did witness a lot then and it was very exciting. The score postings and the wild greetings of the planes when they returned from radar bombing missions - and by the way SAC threw in a nice tidbit then. Spot promotions for the winning crews, including the enlisted maintenance team. Our unit, the 321st Bomb Wing, won in 1957 and I knew several squadron members who received spot promotions - Staff to Tech, Tech to Master. I wanted a chance to do that.

(Continued on page 7)

### Guardian Challenge 2002 - the 35th Anniversary Competition -

by Capt Mike Burk, AF Space Command project officer and AAFM mbrno A2053

Air Force Space Command's annual space warfighter competition, Guardian Challenge, will be 5-10 May 2002 at Vandenberg AFB. Guardian Challenge is the only space competition in the Air Force. The event matches the best-of-the-best space warfighters in AFSPC against each other to determine the top space teams in the Air Force.

Events will kick off on Monday, 6 May, at 0800 with opening ceremonies hosted by the AFSPC Vice Commander. Events throughout the week include competitions, a senior officer and civilian distinguished visitor icebreaker, a space forum allowing senior leaders from the space community to answer questions about space, a contractor exposition and team and sister city dinners. Events will conclude Thursday, 9 May with a scoreposting and awards banquet. In its 35th year and after several name changes, the competition's focus remains the same: to recognize the best and demonstrate skills of AFSPC's

(Continued on page 5)



#### The Mission of the Association of Air Force Missileers -

- Preserving the Heritage of USAF 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

## A Word from the Association

**AFSPC/CC** - LtGen Lance Lord will take command of AF Space Command and be promoted to General. A founding board member of AAFM, he started his AF career as a MMII crewmember at Grand Forks in the 321SMW. Gen Eberhart, the current AFSPC commander, will continue as commander, US Space Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command. The move is part of the recent space commission's recommendations to have a separate four star commander for AF Space Command.

**Tech Orders** - Titan I, Atlas F, Titan II and several Minuteman dash ones are now or soon will be available on CD-ROM. Each CD has the tech order, AAFM newsletter articles about the specific system and the AAFM photo collection for each. You get the CD-ROM for a system for a donation of \$20.

**Elections** - four board members are up for election/reelection. Complete the enclosed post card and return it to us or send an e-mail vote to [aafm@afmissileers.org](mailto:aafm@afmissileers.org).

**Financial Summary for 2001** - Income - \$36,214 (dues \$27,196, donations \$4,164, investments \$1,548 and \$3,306 carried forward from 2000). Expenses - \$36,190 (postage \$4,719, printing \$9,826, awards \$4,455, grants \$10,000.00, operating costs of \$7,190). Operating

*AAFM* is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under section 501 (c) 3 of the IRS Code. The Newsletter is published four times a year.

### Board of Directors -

**President** - LtGen (Ret) Jay Kelley, Colo Springs, CO

**Vice President** - Col (Ret) Jim Burba, Bend, OR

**Secretary** - MSgt (Ret) Dayna Castro, Lompoc, CA

**Treasurer** - CMS (Ret) Bob Kelchner, Torrance, CA

**BGen (Ret) Jim Crouch**, Austin, TX

**CMSgt (Ret) Joe Andrew**, Hanscom AFB, MA

**Col (Ret) Dick Keen**, Punta Gorda, FL

**Col Mike Lehnertz**, Patrick AFB, FL

**LGen Lance Lord**, Asst Vice Chief of Staff, USAF

**MGen (Ret) Tom Neary**, Ashburn, VA

**MGen (Ret) Bob Parker**, Charlestown, WV

**Maj Julie Wittkoff**, Ogden ALC, UT

**Executive Director** - Col (Ret) Charles G. Simpson

**Printer** - Allegra Print and Imaging, 20905 Western Ave  
Torrance, CA 90501, 310-212-7727

Association of Air Force Missileers

PO Box 5693, Breckenridge, CO 80424

[AAFM@afmissileers.org](mailto:AAFM@afmissileers.org) [www.afmissileers.org](http://www.afmissileers.org)

Phone/fax 970-453-0500

costs include office/computer supplies/equipment, publicity, publications, incorporation, telephone, meetings, expense reimbursement and bank charges. \$24 was carried forward to 2002. Assets of \$49,990 included checking \$4,230, savings \$3,811, Paypal \$60 and investments \$41,888.25 for a total Prepaid lifetime/three-year dues (recorded as a liability) total \$47,104. We continue to operate with a sound financial status.

## Letters to the Association

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

**Sheppard** - Your article was much appreciated. The photo from Sheppard was probably in Neal Kearby Hall, and may have been in one of my classrooms. The faces in the photo are all familiar, but the names escape me after roughly 40 years. The Black Officer in the middle may have been Willie Collins, my Whist partner for two years; it looks like him. You gave your dates at Sheppard and that you were on "A" Shift (0600-1200 classroom hours). That guarantees that you had me for part of the THOR Block, and that your text books were ones I wrote. (MIT Aero Engineer doing his Initial Tour as USAF Instructor). I was Atlas F but taught primarily in Thor, while being responsible for all Flight Vehicle subsystems and much of the launch stuff for Thor, Atlas, Titan, and Minuteman (all versions of each of these) for any training manuals or text books we put out. My later career was primarily R&D / R&D Management plus industry. I am currently a computer consultant and am writing a book on WWI history. PS: Remember the missile models in the Thor classrooms? I built those, and they were still in use as Training Aids when Carl Stidsen came through 5 or 10 years later! *H.Larry Elman, mbrno A2022, Boca Raton, FL*

**Electronic Newsletter** - I would like to recommend that the AAFM Newsletter be sent out in Adobe.pdf format or even better simply send an email notice of the posting of the newsletter to the AAFM web site as an alternative to mailing a physical copy to each member. I would offer this as an alternative to receiving the mailed copy to those members who have email addresses on file. I for one enjoy the newsletter but I could just as easily read it online, or if I am especially interested in a particular I could print my own copy. This would save the cost of printing and mailing and those funds could be added to contributions that are already being made. *Gene Williams, mbrno L134, Madison, AL*

(Continued on page 3)

**Letters (Cont)** - *Most of our newsletters are available on our web page, and all will be there soon. However, about half of our members don't use e-mail and the added task of keeping e-mail addresses current to ensure you each get a newsletter makes it easier to stick to the mailed printed copy. When I send out our monthly e-mail updates now, I get more than 100 error messages because of bad addresses or refusal to accept attachments. We mail over 2200 copies of each newsletter - and most readers prefer the printed version.*

**Glossary** - Ullage was the unused tank space on the 1st stage oxidizer tank on the Titan II ICBM. We had to measure this exactly, because running out of oxidizer is what we used to precisely shut down the stage I engines, in preparation for staging. There was no mechanical way of shutting down the 1st stage engines, as there was for Stage II. TRW technicians would come out from Hill AFB after we had uploaded the 1st stage, and I helped them tape a lead ruler to an exact spot on the tank. We taped x-ray film over the ruler where we thought the liquid line was. They had this cranky old x-ray machine, and we would set it up on a tripod shooting through the tank at the ruler and film. We would get WAY BACK and shoot off that x-ray machine. After developing that film, if the liquid line showed up in the right place, we were done, otherwise, there was a portable tank (called the football) that they used to add or subtract a few gallons - it was really wild and dangerous! The oxidizer was Nitrogen Tetroxide - fuming nitric acid. A little spill went a long way! *Bill Howard, mbrno A1196, Milton-Freewater, OR*

**More Glossary** - Sluggo Bag - The black bag used to carry Classified information to the field at the 341SMW. Named for "Sluggo" Chase who had the misfortune of having both doors to the Suburban open at the same time and having "Top Secret" papers scattered all over Montana by a typical hurricane force gust of wind. Two Waitress Policy - the time a 12SMS crew stopped for breakfast at a cafe in Power, Montana and drove off leaving their "package" of classified material on the table. When a waitress peered inside and saw the words "Top Secret" she called Malmstrom and asked if the papers were "important". *Danny Burnett, mbrno A1701, Grandview, ID*

**Rascal** - Was the Rascal missile ever operational with

the Air Force? I have some conflicting information — that it became operational (in October 1958, at Pinecastle AFB with a bomb squadron whose number escapes me), and that it didn't (the nuclear warhead assigned to Rascal was never operational with it, and Rascal went out of the inventory in early 1959, mere months after supposedly becoming operational). *Michael S. Binder, AAFM mbrno SA025, Germantown, MD*

*We had a short article about the Rascal, an early stand-off nuclear weapon designed to be used with the B-47, in the December 1998 issue. Board member Bob Kelchner was at Pinecastle AFB (later McCoy AFB in Orlando when the Rascal was being tested and deployed - it was fielded but was probably never really operational.*

**Stargazer** - I'm looking for information about the first recovered space probe called Stargazer. My Uncle Werner Iller past Wright Patterson base commander was the head of this program. Can any one help me locate information on this and other projects headed up by Werner Iller? Dan P. Iller *Anyone who knows about Stargazer (AAFM couldn't find anything) is asked to contact Dan Iller, Pratt & Whitney Military Engines, F117 Materials-SFO Phone 650-634-2067 Fax 650-634-2068 illerdp@pweh.com*

**Missile Heritage Grants - Chanute** - Thank you for the grant of \$500 toward the relocation and restoration of our Minuteman missile. The staff and volunteers work very hard to maintain and protect the many artifacts that are housed here at the museum, and this grant will help them toward their goal of restoring the missile. Thank you for your support of the Octave Chanute Aerospace Museum.

**National Atomic Museum** - We thank AAFM for the generous grant of \$1300 to renovate our Thor IRBM. Your gift will help us complete the painting and stenciling to bring the missile up to museum quality presentation level. When the project is finished, we will send along photographs and an article for your newsletter. We thank AAFM for your continuing support of educational and preservation programs of the museum. Your gifts have played a major role in four projects and we are very grateful.

*(Continued on page 4)*

**Letters (Cont) - Ellsworth** - It is with deep honor that we accept your grant. Your program to honor the members of your profession with these grants shows the strong bond of professionalism that existed in the missile world. We feel a part of that bond and strive to tell the Minuteman II story as it happened here in South Dakota so that every visitor to the Museum will know the tremendous contribution the men and women of the AF missileers made to secure our freedom. As we closed out the year when for the first time in over 50 years an enemy has struck our nation it is even more fitting that we honor those who served. We must never forget that peace is only achieved when someone is willing to defend the nation that enjoys peace. Thank you and your members for honoring our efforts.

**Pointy End** - Although a lot of us didn't work on the type of missiles that most AAFM members did we feel that we are as much a part of this organization as anyone. I know that most of the organizations that I was in made no attempt to apply for the missile badge for its personnel and you pretty much had to apply for it on your own. I started out as a 461X0 (Munitions Specialist) and later they involuntarily converted me to a 462X0 (Weapons Maintenance Specialist/Supervisor). I spent most of my time in SAC in ADS (Aviation Depot Squadrons) and MMS (Munitions Maintenance Squadrons) as a team member and team chief of a loading team. My missile experience was pretty much with the B-52G aircraft loading W-28 warheads and ADM-20 Quail. In all my time with these organizations I never felt the guys from AMMS felt that we were outsiders. They did become a little disturbed when we use to mess up or loose the screws on the front under panel of the GAM-77(AGM-28). We always had what we thought was the best of relations with the AMMS troops. All of us had to have good relations for we could have never gotten our alert aircraft loaded without it. All in all it was a wonderful career and I will never forget the people and the experiences that I had. Could you possibly have an article on the Hound Dog and Quail?  
*Robert O. Williams, mbrno A1917, West Chazy, NY*

*Bob also asked for photos of B-52 bomb loading operations - if any of you have such photos, let me know. And we have had a couple of recent Hound Dog articles - more coming - and see the next letter.*

**Hound Dog** - I received my newsletter today - thanks for printing my "Hound Dog Too" letter. I hope more of us airlaunch missile types will read it and feel more part of the organization. *Ed Burns, mbrno A2043, Bee Branch, AR*

**Denver Mace** - I did look up the Mace missile in Denver, thanks to your info. It is in Englewood in the City Park. The plaque said it was put there in the early 60's as a playground toy for the kids, and a group of Martin employee residents put it on a very high stand a few years ago. It is sort of dinged up, but in pretty good shape. *Don Ross, mbrno A0808, Pt Arena, CA*

*We had a short article about the missile in the December 1997 newsletter. Don took the photo below.*



Colorado Mace

## Taps for Missileers

### Taps for Missileers

LtCol (Ret) Ray Berry, an AAFM member who was in the 585TMG and 38TWM in Matador/Mace, 44SMW and at 15AF, and lived in Perris, California

LtCol (Ret) Edward Gennaro, an AAFM Member, passed away several months ago, was in the 551SMS in Atlas and lived in Orlando, Florida

William Bernstein, an AAFM Member, passed away several months ago, was in the 556SMS in Atlas and lived in Palm Desert, California

**Vote Now for AAFM Board of Directors**  
**Use the enclosed Post Card or send an e-mail vote to [aafm@afmissileers.org](mailto:aafm@afmissileers.org)**

**GC2002 (Cont)** -warfighters. Guardian Challenge creates competition-tough crews; improves readiness and combat capabilities through preparation, innovation and sharing; enhances esprit de corps and strengthens teamwork across all mission areas in the command.

To qualify for Guardian Challenge, teams first compete at their home stations. These teams are evaluated against stringent criteria and standards developed by AFSPC. Only the highest scoring teams in each mission area travel to the competition. The highlights of Guardian Challenge are the activities at Vandenberg. There, missile combat operations crews, satellite operations crews, remote space tracking crews, security forces, food services specialists, helicopters, space maintenance, missile codes, missile maintenance and missile communications crews will demonstrate their capabilities to a team of evaluators.

Due to the specialized nature of the mission and equipment, space operations teams and communications elements actually compete at their home stations. The top two teams in each area will travel to Vandenberg but won't be told the results of their evaluations until the final day of competition. Helicopter teams also compete in the competition: They focus on navigation, hover and post-maintenance checkout tasks while at Vandenberg. Guardian Challenge is the only competition AF-wide for helicopters.

Teams from the seven space wings and the sole AF Reserve space group will compete for numerous accolades. Awards are presented to the best Space Wing Team in each mission area on the final day of the competition. The Blanchard Trophy is presented to the Best Space ICBM Wing Team; the Aldridge Trophy to the Best Space Operations Wing Team; and the Best Space Launch Wing Team receive the Schriever Trophy.



Top Gun awards go to the best Missile Operations Crew, best Space Operations Crew (selected from among the best Space Warning, Space Surveillance and Satellite Operations crews), and best Spacelift Operations Crew. Additionally, functional area awards are presented to the best maintenance, security police, communications, chef, codes and helicopter elements. Guardian Challenge is the only peacetime opportunity for Air Force space wing teams to fully demonstrate the effectiveness of their training and procedures in a competitive environment. Lessons learned from this competition are used to refine day-to-day procedures and policies.

1969 Blanchard Team



## 35 Years of Competition - by Col (Ret)

Charlie Simpson, Executive Director, AAFM

It was Curtain Raiser - then Olympic Arena - and now Guardian Challenge. "It" is a serious event - the competition to be named the best in missiles and space - but behind the serious, dedicated participation of the competitors is the spirit, the excitement and the noise of the annual Space and Missile Competition.

It started small, two missile crews and a targeting team representing each of the six Minuteman and three Titan II wings in 1967's Curtain Raiser. The event was canceled in 1968, and Olympic Arena began in 1969, with a "Comp" held every year since. OA 69 saw serious scorepostings with no narrator, and a formal award ceremony with Class A blues, commendation medals and promotions for the enlisted winners. There were cheers and celebrations - I know - those of us on the winning Blanchard team left the club at 0600 so we could get to the awards ceremony practice at

(Continued on page 6)

**35 Years (Cont)** -0700, following the midnight scoreposting. But there were no mascots, cheerleaders or noisemakers. Little Rock did bring Miss Arkansas, and the famous "Soooooee, root, root, root...." cheer was heard a lot.

Wing display booths, unit pins and stickers and team uniforms started that year, and by 1970, the spirit was growing. Warren had full dress 1880s US Army Cavalry uniforms, dressy western suits and one piece jump suits, and wings brought civilian guests and outstanding airmen. The score posting now had a voice - Capt Bob Gifford was the first "Voice of the Big Board", followed by Maj Jim Burba, and the NCOs who put up the numbers honed their technique of keeping the crowd in suspense as they shuffled scores around the big, blue scoreboard in the Recreation Center. The "Stump", TSgt Eucalyptus T. (for Tree) Stump arrived in 1976, growing from Whiteman's cheer "Stump the root", an answer to the Little Rock Razorback pig "root, root, root." Through the years, Stump rose in rank, finally retiring as a four star general when the 351MW closed.

Mascots included the Black Hills Bandit from Ellsworth, whose long barreled six shooter was finally banned from scorepostings because of the noise and fire danger - once the Bandit ignited some tiles in the club ceiling with a shot fired in celebration. Warren's Trooper, Whiteman's War Hawk, Minot's Teddy Roosevelt and others arrived, but Grand Forks had difficulty identifying with a dynamic mascot. The "Sugar Beet" (the cheer "beet the stump" didn't last long) survived only one year - when Col Barry Horton took command of the 321SMW, he created the "Warrior of the North", a more fitting symbol for a warfighting organization. Mascots continue to be a big part of Guardian Challenge, from Teddy and the trooper to the wrangler, the shark, the hawk and others that sometimes change or evolve with the times.

Entertainment has also been a major part of the event - in 1970, folks from Davis Monthan, led by Capt Bill Swisher, brought a movie that began with a Patton-like speech to the crew force by wing commander Col Ed Denton and ending with a cream pie fight in the launch control center between the black-hooded "dreaded SAC IG" and the 390SMW "good guys". Vandenberg musicians, ranging in rank from captain to colonel, entertained at the Officers Club every night during the comp for several years. The Groobers arrived in the mid-70s - four talented Warren crew members who sang parodies of

popular songs, including "SAT Troop Lullaby", "There are no Missilemen down in Hell" and others. Gen Russ Dougherty, CINCSAC, was so impressed, he had them sing at numerous SAC commanders conferences and other key events. One year, streakers made a quick dash through the clubs before disappearing into the night - I was walking up the sidewalk at the O'Club when they exited. In 1989, popular singer Lee Greenwood was a guest of Gen Jack Chain at Olympic Arena - we all stood and sang his "Proud to be an American" several times. In the last few years, the Vandenberg folks have enticed several Hollywood stars to take part, first on the big screen in videos and, in 2001, in person at the banquet.

Wing displays ebbed and flowed - units started small with Chamber of Commerce displays about the surrounding areas, but an award for best booth encouraged units to do more - it took a separate aircraft just to transport the unit displays. The command limited the size and complexity of displays, and, with Guardian Challenge, unit booths disappeared. On the other hand, the contractor expo has grown each year since 1994. It now fills the Vandenberg club with contractor and other displays.

Scoreposting has evolved from twice-a-day, formal, quiet events to an electronic frenzy. The big blue board was in the Recreation Center initially, then the "Competition Center" across the parking lot from the club and finally the Sesto Auditorium (the old base theater). The NCO scoreposters and the narrator got better at building suspense every year. During Olympic Arena, the nightly scorepostings were big events, with the awards given out the day following the final scoreposting at a formal ceremony at the Sesto. With the advent of Guardian Challenge and the new venue, the helicopter hangar, everything was combined into one event - banquet, scoreposting and awards. In 1994, 1995 and 1996, trophies were awarded as winners were announced, with no comparative scores shown. In 1997, MGen Lance Lord became the "Voice of the Big Board" and initiated the electronic scoreboard, and the cheer "Post 'em" returned. The final night still features a great Santa Maria Barbecue meal, lots of noise and lots of spirit - and the "Best of the Best" is recognized just like it was in 1967.

**Sigh up Now for the  
2002 AAFM National Meeting  
See Back Cover for Details**

**Curtain Raiser (Cont)** - In 1961 I was selected for Minuteman ICBM training and reassignment. Kiss Bomb Comp good by. Fast forward to December 1966. As a young 28 year old SSgt assigned to a Minuteman Targeting and Alignment (T&A) team, the thought of competing in a SAC missile competition was a dream come true. I was stationed at the 341SMW at Malmstrom in the Wing QC&E Division. As a T&A Evaluator, along with my fellow evaluators, I was responsible to maintain SAC's maintenance standards. Keeping the SAC bible near, SAC Manual 66-12, was a way of life. We were tough evaluators back then, with an Unqualified rate of at least 50%.

Needless to say, when the Missile Competition was announced in November we wanted to show our stuff. But, it was not to be that easy. At first, SAC planned for only the combat crews to compete. However, the T&A teams had officers as a team chiefs. Consequently, the Minuteman T&A Teams and the Titan II Alignment Teams were added to the competition set for April 1967. For a few weeks into January the maintenance teams at all nine ICBM wings were not too enthusiastic about busting their buns to train for a missile competition. The combat crews had career incentives, but the maintenance teams would have to train in addition to their normal duties. By mid January SAC announced spot promotions would be awarded to the winning maintenance team at the competition. There were a few ground rules associated with the spot promotions, e.g. only promotions up to MSgt would be awarded. The enlisted promotion system at that time did not have the current WAPS process. Consequently, making spot promotions easier to accomplish - this got everyone charged up.

The three Titan II and six Minuteman wings began local competitions to select the best of the best. Our wing was no exception. The wing commander, Col John Carroll, insisted we have fair local competition for combat crews and maintenance. There were three exercises that were scored and after three weeks my team was selected. I was ready, I wanted that spot promotion. In April, with major fanfare at the base, a KC-135 flight to Vandenberg and special treatment for all, we were ready. The missile competition was new to everyone. The 3901st Strategic Missile Evaluation Squadron was given the responsibility of writing the scripts, evaluating the exercises and managing the overall competition. We were interviewed and taped in a special TV room and stories were written in our home town newspapers. For the enlisted maintenance team members this was real war. There was a spot promotion waiting out there for the winning team. Our training was based on several tasks published by SAC, but no time limit was given.

*(Continued on page 8)*

### **Curtain Raiser - Olympic Arena - Guardian Challenge - The Winners**

1967 - 351SMW, Whiteman	1969 - 321SMW, Grand Forks	1970 - 44SMW, Ellsworth
1971 - 351SMW, Whiteman	1972 - 381SMW, McConnell	1973 - 90SMW, Warren
1974 - 321SMW, Grand Forks	1975 - 381SMW, McConnell	1976 - 341SMW, Malmstrom
1977 - 351SMW, Whiteman	1978 - 91SMW, Minot	1979 - 390SMW, Davis Monthan
1980 - 381SMW, McConnell	1981 - 351SMW, Whiteman	1982 - 44SMW, Ellsworth
1983 - 381SMW, McConnell	1984 - 90SMW, Warren	1985 - 308SMW, Little Rock
1986 - 341SMW, Malmstrom	1987 - 321SMW, Grand Forks	1988 - 91SMW, Minot
1990 and 1991 - 341SMW, Malmstrom	1992 - 44MW, Ellsworth	1993 - 351SMW, Whiteman
1994 - 742MS, Blanchard, 91MXS, Leffler, 319th Comm Squadron, Randerson, 21st Comm Squadron, Powers, 3rd Space Launch Squadron, Chennault		
1995 - 10MS, Blanchard, 6th Space Operations Squadron, Aldrigde, 8th Space Warning Squadron, O'Malley, 17th Space Surveillance Squadron, Arnold, 1st Space Launch Squadron, Schriever		
1996 - 319MS, Blanchard, 20th Space Surveillance Squadron, Arnold, 22nd Space Operations Squadron, Aldridge, 7th Space Warning Squadron, O'Malley, 5th Space Launch Squadron, Schriever		
1997 - 320MS, Blanchard, 1st Space Surveillance Squadron, Aldridge, 821st Space Group, O'Malley, 20th Space Surveillance Squadron, Arnold, 5th Space Launch Squadron, Schriever		
1998 - 341SW, Blanchard, 21SW, Aldridge, 45SW, Schriever		
1999 - 341SW, Blanchard, 50SW, Aldridge, 30SW, Schriever		
2000 - 91SW, Blanchard, 21SW, Aldridge, 45SW Schriever		
2001 - 91SW, Blanchard, 21SW, Aldridge, 30SW, Schriever		

**Curtain Raiser (Cont)** - Obviously we had to be fast. Our job as targeting and alignment was to load targeting data into the on board missile computer and optically align the missile. My Team Chief was Capt Bill Kime and my other team member was MSgt Bill Murray. I was the only team member eligible to win a spot promotion. Believe me, we spent a lot of time together, training for this once in a life time shot. I ran the targeting console topside, loading targeting tapes, etc. and the two Bills did their tasks in the launcher equipment room. We kept in touch via intercom. We raced in and raced out as did eight other maintenance teams and 18 Combat Crews over a period of five working days. There are stories within stories. Money bet, won and lost. One Minuteman T&A team was all set at the site gate, the OK was given to go, and the team revved the engine of the large 5 ton truck and proceeded to plow over the guard shack. No one hurt, but a little paint and pride scratched. The monitors and maintenance team righted the guard shack, backed up the truck and started over again. No points lost, no time lost. Overall it was a great competition. A Titan II Alignment team won three spot promotions. One Master and two Techs. I went back to Malmstrom with a bag full of new tricks and great memories.

Many of the competitors went on to be Wing Commanders, Squadron Commanders, leaders in the AF, tours in Viet Nam and promotions to Chief Master Sergeant. I know of at least five Chiefs from Curtain Raiser. The competition changed the lives and careers of almost all that attended and we made life long friends. Because of the increased pace of the Viet Nam war, SAC canceled the 1968 Competition. And so, the missile and space competition rolls on. From Curtain Raiser, to Olympic Arena to Guardian Challenge. If longevity is the standard to measure this type of event, I guess the missile and space competition is a success. We must be doing something right. I'm looking forward to seeing some old friends at Guardian Challenge this year, when the curtain is raised again.

## Confessions of a Missile Game

**Gunslinger** - *Bu LtCol (Ret) Charles E. Gordon, AAFM Mbrno A1994. Chuck Lives in Littleton, CO*

It was a Sunday evening, 3 May 1970. Rod and I deliberately arrived late for the scoreposting ceremony. We pushed our way through the throng of missileers and tried to gain a vantage point to view the scoreboard. Several of our Ellsworth teammates bolted out of the crowd and descended upon us with bear hugs and handshakes. "Congratulations, you did it!" they yelled. They were cheering the best missile game players in the business. We'd won the whole shebang!

When I joined the 44SMW in September 1966, I was just another pudknocker that was expected to up-

1970 44SMW Team



**Captain Chuck Gordon**

grade quickly and start pulling my share of alerts. I got an ex-Standard Deputy, upgrading to Crew Commander before he returned to the cockpit. During our first trainer ride he barked at me, "Whoa, slow down! You're way ahead of me. We're going to double-check everything and prevent needless errors." I complied and routinely upgraded with five minors that were nitpicky. Naturally, he got a 5.0. It was your typical "Welcome aboard, Rookie!" For several months no one paid me much attention as I kept my eyes and ears open, soaking up every little detail I could uncover about the subtle complexities of the system and the various tricks of the trade. I studied hard and mastered every task procedure. Deep down,

*(Continued on page 9)*

**Gunslinger (Cont)** -I felt self-assured, almost cocky-ready to show off my stuff if and when I ever got an opportunity.

Ellsworth at the time was rank heavy and had a whole slew of so-called "hotshot" crews, instructors and evaluators mostly, that set the standards for how the "missile-game" in the trainer was being played and evaluated. I couldn't help craving, when am I going to get back in that trainer again? Just by accident, I was invited to watch our two "Curtain Raiser" crews as they trained for the 1967 Competition. I was told, "Sit in the corner and be quiet 'cause you might learn something!" Not bad, I thought, but they're nothing to write home about-just plodding through their checklists, double-checking every action. They didn't scare me a bit. I wondered how they ever got selected in the first place.

In the summer of 1967 I got a new Commander, Charlie Whisenant, a down-to-earth country boy from Tennessee, and a trainer ride suddenly appeared on our schedule. Charlie cautioned me, "Chuckles, I think it's a check ride. We're gonna have a peanut-gallery full of spectators 'cause they're thinkin' about makin' us instructors." They were - and we put on a magnificent show for 'em. We both barely got HQs with some really nitpicky-minors. "Welcome to the big time, you miserable pudnockers!"

Being an instructor was like I'd died and gone to hog heaven! Charlie was a natural-born teacher and I finally had access to the trainer and the missile game. We specialized in upgrade training because the Wing was now experiencing a tremendous turnover in personnel. Our goal was not to just get a crew upgraded, but to influence them for their entire tour of duty. We taught the whole package-technical, motivational and procedural-tailoring it to fit the crew. As Charlie liked to say, "There's more than one way to skin a cat!" And it worked. We expertly trained our students with meaningful results. The rapport we established with them was rock solid. Guys frequently came to us with questions, advice or extra training needs after they had upgraded. That was the gratifying part of being an instructor. Training was a two way street because the more I taught, the more I learned about the game. I became a script-writing machine, frequently carrying around a dozen or more training scripts at a time. I was obsessed with the trainer, and the thought of the game sustained me. I'd become a real game junkie.

Then, it became time for me to upgrade to Com-

mander. I feel sorry for my poor Deputy because it must have been a horrible experience for him. We didn't need an instructor crew because I trained him myself. He spent hours at my house refining techniques and procedures. Our trainer rides were mere formalities. We were the best prepared crew I'd seen. You guessed it! We both got half a dozen minors-really, really nitpicky minors. "Welcome aboard, Rookie and new Commander!" After about seven months of pulling alerts I became antsy, yearning to get back to the missile game. That's when SAC announced plans to reinstate a yearly competitive event for its best crews. Its code name was "Olympic Arena." SAC had inaugurated the idea in 1967 under a rather bland, yet traditional, format. A follow-on scheme for 1968 never got off the ground because of Vietnam War influences. But the 1969 concept was new and ambitious-timing criteria at a level no SAC crew could possibly meet. Crews would not only lose point deductions for errors, but task completion times in excess of the baseline standard. Wow! It was just what I'd been looking for, an advanced-level game-one played against the clock with no holds barred.

I had to be a part of it. My first step was to win a selection. After testing more than a dozen crews, our Selection Committee decided I had potential for success. I convinced them to let me choose 1Lt Bill Duryee, a spirited instructor who really knew his stuff, as my crew partner. Bill was a zany bachelor from Hempstead, NY. Everybody called him Jerry Lewis because he looked and acted like the famous comedian. He was a character with a one-track mind attuned to the latest music craze and jabbering an endless stream of nonsense. But, he played lots of sports - a real jock - and he always played to win. That's why I wanted him. My game plan focused on ways to improve crew speed. I wanted to push the outside of the speed envelope for an operating zone just short of the breakneck level. I challenged every traditional method of working problems and adopted a set of new, innovative practices to split every crew activity. Bill and I memorized every checklist step, designed procedural shortcuts and adopted a silent coordination technique. We streamlined every phrase, action and motion we intended to use in Olympic Arena. We were going to be fast, professional robots, able to perform independently with great precision and consistency. For almost two months, our crew was in the trainer almost every day. Bill and I honed our skills and practiced our techniques until we were awesome. Our speed became incredible -

*(Continued on page 10)*

**Gunslinger (Cont)** - it got to the point where we could complete a three-hour script in less than an hour. But how good were we? I didn't know.

We went to the 1969 Competition and showcased our risky, finely tuned playing style. Our three exercise scores were: 368.5, 317 and 376.5 points. That's right- we made a critical error, a 50-point deduction, on the second ride. "You screwed up, speed demons." We were just going too damn fast to catch it! As I watched Leuty and Banning from Minot receive their trophies, I couldn't help thinking: Without the big error, our total score would have been 1,112 points-enough to win "Best Crew" honors by 4.5 points. I then realized I couldn't live on "what ifs" very long. I had to come back and give it another shot in 1970. At that moment, I dedicated myself to doing it right the next time.

It wasn't long before our crew was split up. I got 1Lt Rod DeRego who had lost his crew chief due to a follow-on assignment. Rod was a paradox-short in physical stature, but very tall in untapped abilities. No one had really challenged him before, but I saw a lot of raw potential. So I started teaching him my Olympic Arena style of play to see if he could handle it. After all, I was going back to the Competition and needed a suitable Deputy. We worked on it during our alert tours and practiced every chance we got.

Rod was a fast-learner and made steady progress. I definitely liked what I saw. He had ice water in his veins and a mind that worked like a computer. It was a natural trait resulting from his propensity for accounting and computer programming. His only fault was a strong New England accent since Rod had grown up in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Overall, Rod was not as fast as Bill Duryee, but in many respects he was stronger- much more analytical and sure-footed. As 1970 approached, Rod and I devoted more and more time to our training. We did most of it at a dinette table in my kitchen. By the time of the crew selection effort, we were operating in Olympic Arena form. Our selection was never in doubt.

We got off to a slow start at the 1970 Competition with a disappointing score of only 357 points. I was the problem because I was trying too hard. I made some adjustments and our second exercise was an absolute jewel. Our 391 points was the best exercise score ever posted in Competition history. We went into the final

*(Continued on page 12)*

## Reunions

**455SMW (Minot)** - Courtyard by Marriott in Santa Fe, NM, 24-28 April 2002, contact Ken JuVette, 632 Superstition Dr SE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124, email [Dkjuvt@webtv.net](mailto:Dkjuvt@webtv.net), phone 505-896-4826

**579SMS**, Atlas, 11-14 April 2002, Cape Canaveral, FL, Contact Gene Lamb, 3313 W Glenn Ave, Midwest City, OK 73110-3709, phone 405-737-2471, email [dlamb@mmcable.com](mailto:dlamb@mmcable.com)

**567SMS**, Atlas, 28 Aug - 1 Sep 2002, Spokane WA. Contact Dick Mellor, 6331 N Elmhurst, Spokane, WA 99208, phone 509-327-2978, email [elm1929@aol.com](mailto:elm1929@aol.com)

**SAC 2002**, 16-18 May 2002, The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum, Pooler, Georgia (outside of Savannah). AAFM has more details

**AMMS Alumni**, 25-28 April 2002, Ft Walton Beach, Florida, contact AMMS Missileers Reunion, 205 Biltmore Terr, Warner Robins GA 31088, or Jerri Lewis at [MINOL@AOL.COM](mailto:MINOL@AOL.COM) or Pete Starkis at [petestarkis@home.com](mailto:petestarkis@home.com)

**556th SMS Plattsburgh**, is holding a reunion in conjunction with AAFM, 23- 27 October 2002, Santa Maria, CA.. Information, contact: Bruce Raleigh, e-mail [raleighb@CC.TACOM.army.mil](mailto:raleighb@CC.TACOM.army.mil), address 8273 Burning Bush, Grosse Ile, MI 48138

**6555ATW, Gemini Launch Vehicle Division personnel**, 29 April 2002 in Williamsburg and Western, Virginia. Contact Alexander Kuras at [Kuras424@cs.com](mailto:Kuras424@cs.com), or 757-220-3083

**390SMW**, 40th Anniversary of Titan II, 24-29 September 2002, Orlando, Florida, contact John or Sue Lasher, PO Bopx 17916, Tucson, AZ 85731, phone 520-886-7157 or visit [www.390smwma.org](http://www.390smwma.org)

**485TMW (Florennes GLCM)**, 13-15 June 2002, Charleston, SC, Contact Cal Chasteen, 803-276-4406, [cchasteen@earthlink.net](mailto:cchasteen@earthlink.net) or John Rudzianski, 570-278-2482, [jrudz@epix.net](mailto:jrudz@epix.net)

**GLCM Historical Foundation** - 25 May 2002, dedication of Outdoor Display at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson Gen Ron Fogleman, former AF Chief of Staff, will be the featured speaker. Email [glcmhf@gci-net.com](mailto:glcmhf@gci-net.com) or go to [www.glcmhf.org](http://www.glcmhf.org).

**69th, 586th, 701st Tac Missile Reunion Association** - 9 Sept 2002 in Washington, DC. Fred Herbert, email [frederick.herbert@gte.net](mailto:frederick.herbert@gte.net).

## From AAFM President LtGen (Ret) Jay Kelley Re-Visiting the ICBM Force

There have been a lot of changes in America's ICBM force over the past several years, and those changes have had major implications for those who volunteered to serve in the world's best ICBM force. Take a look at this list of a dozen changes and think a minute about what this means to you.

Re-named    Re-uniformed    Re-aligned    Re-organized    Re-labeled    Re-trained    Re-acted  
Re-connected    Re-competed    Re-careered    Re-targeted    Re-warriored

Re-named. We still have fighter wings, bomb wings and airlift wings, but we don't have missile wings anymore, only space wings. Words mean a lot especially when they apply to what it is you do. It's a bit of a stretch to call a missile wing a space wing. Perhaps its because ICBMs do indeed rise to an altitude technically called space en route to their targets. And they do award astronaut wings to pilots when they rise above a certain altitude. But somehow all this misses the point.. ..its more about what is done than where its done. And while we still regard ourselves as missileers, the Air Force now regards us as operators and the subtlety of that term is probably lost on many of us.

Re-uniformed. Some of us remember "flour bags" and two-piece blues, and more recently it was a "blue-bag" and nice blue jacket. Today it's a "green bag" and nice leather jacket. Perhaps this goes along with our recognition as operators by our Air Force.

Re-aligned. The organize, train and equip functions in support of ICBMs resides in Colorado Springs with AFSpace, while the fighting responsibility aligns with Omaha. We are a fighting component, 20AF, of CINCSTRAT, and the only nuclear weapon system organized, trained and equipped by AFSpace. And while you know you are in "nuclear weapon country" when you are at Offutt AFB and STRATCOM Hq, you don't get that same sense on Peterson AFB nor at AFSpace Hq..... but we are working on that !

Re-organized. Some years ago, in the early nineties, our Air Force transitioned from the tri-deputate wing structure of DCO/DCM/DCR to the Ops Group, Log Group and Support Group structure and we lost the Security Police Group. Attending this were critically important changes in the organization and structure of maintenance and security. We have made some course corrections to these changes and things are working well today.

Re-trained. Some of us recall the "glory days" of the SAC IG, 4315CCTS and the "dreaded SMES" (3901SMES). They're gone. But AETC has shouldered the responsibility for preparing new warriors and sending them to the field near combat ready. The AFSpace IG is alive and well and the "SMES" function now is assigned to 20AF.

Re-labeled. Not so long ago, we had LCFs and we had 'em for a long, long time. Today we have MAFs (Missile Alert Facility). The function is the same, just a new bumper sticker.

Re-acted. A few years back we had a major modification to the weapon system called REACT. That modification was more than a change to the hardware and software. Some would say that it changed the fundamental nature of the business in the capsule. Some would also assert that there really wasn't much difference between the commander and deputy's functions before REACT. For sure there is less functional difference after REACT. But as many of us have learned, commanding is a lot less about switches and consoles than it is about people, and importantly, our missileers have only gotten better !

Re-connected. Not so long ago and not so far away, when a maintenance team or fire team went into the field, there were a couple of basic ways for them to communicate; the LF line, and the SIN line, through the capsule, and the radio through the FSC, and of course the pay phone at the gas station. An important aspect of these is that it kept the FSC and crew in the loop. Today, the cell phone has replaced the pay phone at the gas station. Importantly that cell phone is far easier to use and can either reinforce normal comm lines or if abused, circumvent the crew and or FSC.

Re-competed. I remember Curtain Raiser, but more vividly, Olympic Arena, and now Guardian Challenge. A big difference as anyone would tell you. How many remember the 3901st with "the Burb" and "Post 'Em ! " ?

(Continued on page 12)

**AAFM President (Cont)** - Today, score posting is more like a video game slot machine, complete with computer graphics. The warrior spirit is strong and the final score posting environment is as loud as ever! But while the "style" of the competition and score posting is different, I would tell you the competitors are better than we were.....smart, spirited, motivated and charged to win.

Re-careered. It was hard enough to get MM and Titan and maybe, just maybe, some maintenance experience in the old days... two out of three wasn't bad! But today the career field is space AND missile, and that means missiles, space surveillance, satellite ops, missile warning, and space lift! Gimme a break! And how about the "using" business of ICBMs, the JSTPS (now STRATCOM) and the JCS/J-3? The upward development of ICBM field experience has to be taking a hit and giving way to a wider horizontal spread to multiple specialty areas in order to round out the career field experience. The result is folks who know a lot about the multiple horizontal parts of space while in-depth missile experience is at risk.

Re-targeted. In the cold war our missiles were aligned and assigned specific primary and alternate targets aimed at the potential bad guys. Some years ago, that gave way to BOA (broad ocean area) targeting for arms control purposes. I remember the initial impact of that decision to be somewhat de-moralizing to the crew members. What am I doing here, if not to be ready to fire on order? Over time that feeling has subsided, since it would only take a few minutes to re-target, align and launch.

Re-warriorred. All this comes to rest with a "new warrior" vs a new edition of the "cold warrior". In some respects, the difference is much the same as between the "cold warrior" and the WW II vets who fought in the Bomb Groups of B-17s, 24s and 29s from which our missile wings, excuse me, space wings, evolved. Strategic deterrence is still a common point between the Cold Warriors and today's new warriors, but since 11 September, it seems to be more about defense than deterrence. Through the 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's it was about deterring a reasonably well defined "evil empire". The importance of what we were doing was clear, definite and respected. In the 90's that clarity became a bit blurred. Today, since 11 September, our nuclear strike capability is better than ever but the world in which it exists is stunningly different. The definitions of enemy, adversary, and response ain't the same and clarity isn't what it used to be. Thank the Lord for our strong national leadership team in this time of extraordinary national stress. We also note the heightened importance of nuclear safety and security in this time of international terrorism. Top notch security forces, deployed and prepared have never been more important as members of America's ICBM team. All of us need to refocus our attention on this critically important part of the team and ensure that we are doing the "right modernization" in security as well as with the weapon system itself.

Summary. We have the "world's best" ICBM force.....still! They are focused and professional. Well aware of the crucial importance of what they are responsible for. It is essential that the rest of us not forget the importance of what they do.... nuclear safety, security, operations and maintenance.

**Gunslinger (Cont)** -round smelling victory, but the third exercise was an absolute killer, a virtual quagmire of tricky problems, which progressed with mounting difficulty and compressed reaction time. The ride was so difficult I was concerned about the outcome. On that fateful night of 3 May, Rod and I went late to avoid the tension of seeing the posting slowly unfold. We preferred a sudden dose of reality. My trepidation was wrong because we got 387 points-more than enough to win. "Boys, take a seat on Olympus - you've shown us the righteous stuff."

After all the kudos and celebrating, I realized few people fully understood how we did it. We had climbed to the top of the heap because we were just speed freaks -

sort of like Old West Gunslingers. That's all - nothing else. I'm glad the missile community decided to deemphasize the speed factor after the 1970 comp. Our feat did nothing to advance the art of crew proficiency, but hopefully it stimulated a lot of interest in the MIS-SILE GAME.

When asked which one of my Deputies were the best, I once replied, "I'll never tell. It was a great honor to play the game with both of them. Each one had their own strengths and skills . . . and a few weaknesses. But never forget, I was the one who taught them how to play the wide-open-throttle style."