



Countdown, 5-4-3-2-1, A Missile and Space Mosaic



The AAFAM Mosaic

Gen Lord, Anderson, Simpson and Kelley



AAFAM Art Project Dedicated at AF Space Command

A six by twelve foot glass mosaic titled "Countdown, 5-4-3-2-1" by Denver artist Darrell Anderson was unveiled and dedicated at Headquarters, Air Force Space Command on 9 November 2004. The dedication was conducted as part of AFSPC ICBM Heritage Day, with General Lance Lord, LtGen (Ret) Jay Kelley, Col (Ret) Charlie Simpson and artist Darrell Anderson participating. More than 100 Heritage Day attendees were present, as well as hundreds of AFSPC officers, enlisted members and civilians.

Darrell was accompanied by a number of friends and family, as well as others who assisted with the project, including the supplier of the dichroic glass that makes up the mosaic, Shannon Abote. The mosaic hangs in the atrium where special ceremonies and "balcony calls" are conducted, and was dedicated to "the men and women involved in operating, maintaining and supporting Air Force missile and space systems in the past, present and future."

The project grew out of a decision by the AAFAM Board of Directors at the 2004 National Meeting in Santa Maria to develop and fund a "missile and space art project." Your AAFAM executive director met the artist about six months later on a Denver golf course, and the two began discussing the project. Darrell Anderson is a well known Denver artist with a studio in an old jazz club in the Five Points area of Denver. He has been involved in a number of public art projects, including mosaics at Denver International Airport and the Wellington Webb Denver City Building. After a visit to AFSPC headquarters last year, Darrell presented his initial idea for the project, a large glass mosaic depicting a missile lifting off from earth, with two "space tracks" across the sky. The missile countdown sequence, a series common to both space and ICBM launches, is the basis of the piece - both the missile and the internal figures in the two tracks are made up of the numbers "5-4-3-2-1."

Early this year, the idea was refined and presented to Gen Lance Lord, AFSPC commander, for approval,

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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 - Keeping Missileers Informed
- Encouraging Meetings and Reunions - Providing a Central Point of Contact for Missileers

GLCM - Ground Launched Cruise Missile, Part I



This is Part I of several parts about the short history of the Ground Launched Cruise Missile. We already have other stories and articles for Part II in March, and welcome your personal stories for this and later issues

Artist concept of a GLCM launch from deployed location

GLCM - from Concept to Mission Complete

- by Col (Ret) Charlie Simpson, AAFM Executive Director, the first person assigned to the new GLCM base at Comiso, Sicily on 30 April 1983

The Beginning

From the early 1980s to the middle of 1991, Air Force missileers were involved in a new and exciting weapon system that represented a significant change in life style for them. While a few of the senior officers and NCOs involved with this new system had served in an older tactical missile system, either the Matador or Mace, most of the men and women involved with developing, testing, training, maintaining, operating, securing or supporting this new system had spent their previous missile time in underground facilities in the heartland of the US. The Ground Launched Cruise Missile, based in Europe, gave missileers an opportunity rare for our career field - a chance to served overseas, and an opportunity to experience life "in the field."

During the 1970s, the Soviet Union developed and deployed new medium range ballistic missiles at locations throughout the western Soviet Union, with the weapons aimed at targets throughout NATO. The US and NATO attempted to arrive at agreements with the Soviets to limit or eliminate these new missiles to no avail, so in December 1979, the NATO ministers made the decision to deploy similar systems in Europe to counter the Soviet force. The new NATO intermediate nuclear force would be made up of 108 Pershing II ballistic missiles operated by the US Army and 464 Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCM) operated by the US

Air Force. GLCM would be operated and maintained by US personnel, but the security force for the system would be a mix of USAF and host nation personnel.

GLCM would be based at six locations throughout Europe (see page 7). Each location had its own unique problems, but all required extensive construction by the USAF. For example, at Comiso, Sicily, the largest GLCM base, the location was a bombed out World War II German/Italian fighter bomber base. During Patton's landing in 1943, Stuka dive bombers took off from Comiso to bomb the beaches, only to be met by US troops when they landed for rearming and fuel. The base had little use between the end of the war and the start of GLCM construction in 1982. The buildings on the base were almost all bombed out shells and the 5,000 foot runway had trees growing out of it. A few of the old buildings were refurbished and used



MGen David Nichols, USAF Chief of Staff, on his first visit to the Porta-cabins of Comiso, with first commander Col Charlie Simpson and first sergeant SMSgt Bob Quay

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The US flag raised for the first time at Comiso, May 1983, with LtCol Aldo Michelini, the Italian AF commander

by the US or the Italians, but most were demolished - carefully, because of the large amount of unexploded WWII ordnance - and a new base constructed from the ground up. At other bases, situations were similar. Some existing buildings were modified, but many new facilities were constructed.

The Gryphon

The missile, the BGM-109G Gryphon, was developed from the General Dynamics Tomahawk, sometimes called the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM), which is launched today from Navy ships and submarines in a nonnuclear version. The missile was 21 feet long with a diameter of 21 inches, had a wingspan of a little over 8 and a half feet, weighed 3,940 pounds completely loaded, traveled at just under Mach 1, had a range of 1,500 miles, and, after initial boost by a 7,000 pound thrust solid propellant rocket engine, was sustained in flight by an F-107 turbofan engine built by Williams International Corporation with approximately 600 pounds of thrust. The guidance system was manufactured by McDonnell Douglas Astronautics. Compared to the first generation of ICBMs, which could strike within a mile or two of their targets, the Gryphon had pinpoint accuracy that was measured in mere feet with the W-84 nuclear warhead.

GLCM in the Field

For former SAC missileers who had spent their alert time deep underground in hardened control centers, life as a GLCM launch officer or maintainer was a lot different. The GLCM was designed to operate in a flight with sixteen missiles. The flight would be normally on base, with the missiles and vehicles secured in the hard-

ened storage area called the GAMA (GLCM Alert and Maintenance Area). During periods of increased tension, the flights would be deployed to pre-surveyed, classified locations in the countryside away from the base. The members of the flight would dig in, erect camouflage netting to hide the vehicles and prepare for launch.

The flight was made up of 69 people and a 22 vehicles. Four transporter-erector-launchers (TEL) each carried four "all up rounds", missiles in their containers and ready for launch. Two launch control centers (LCC), each with two launch officers, were connected to the TELs and interconnected for launch. Each TEL and LCC was towed by a large MAN tractor and was capable of traversing rough terrain. There were 16 support vehicles for the flight commander, normally a captain, 19 maintenance technicians, a medical technician and 44 security personnel. Security forces were a mix of USAF security force specialists and host nation security. For example, at Comiso, the host nation had a Carabinieri organization commanded by a lieutenant or captain that provided the Italian part of the security force.

Flight commanders were tasked to survey and select more than one possible deployment site, with all details closely held, and the commander selected the location preferred when the flight deployed from the base. When deployed, the flight was self sustaining, and secured with special intrusion detection radar.

GLCM Launch

The missiles were launched from an elevated TEL, with the missile ejected from its cannister for about 13 seconds of solid rocket booster flight. The fins extended at 4 seconds, the air inlet and wings deployed at 10 seconds and the jet engine started at the end of the boost phase. Flying at low level, the missile was guided by TERCOM (terrain contour matching) to the target.

Dugway test launch



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Training

GLCM personnel were trained at Davis Monthan AFB, Arizona, by the 868th Tactical Missile Training Squadron from 1 July 1981 to 1 October 1985, when it became the 868th Tactical Missile Training Group, consisting of the 868th Tactical Missile Training Squadron, 868th Tactical Missile Maintenance Squadron and the 868th Student Squadron. The group was deactivated on 31 May 1990. An area near Fort Huachuca was used for field training for GLCM flights.

Testing

GLCM testing was conducted at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah, with many of the people involved in the testing going to operational wings as they were activated. Col Tom Bowen ran the test program at Dugway then became the first commander of the wing at Comiso.

The GLCM Units

The operational units included:

501st Tactical Missile Wing (TMW) at RAF Greenham Common, United Kingdom, with 96 missiles, including the 11th Tactical Missile Squadron (TMS) and the 501st Tactical Missile Maintenance Squadron (TMMS), from 1 July 1982 to 31 May 1991.

The 487TMW at Comiso AS, Italy (Sicily), with 112 missiles, including the 302TMS and the 487TMMS, from 30 June 1983 to 27 May 1991,

485TMW at Florennes AB, Belgium, with 48 missiles including the 71TMS and the 485TMMS, from 1 August 1984 to 30 April 1989,

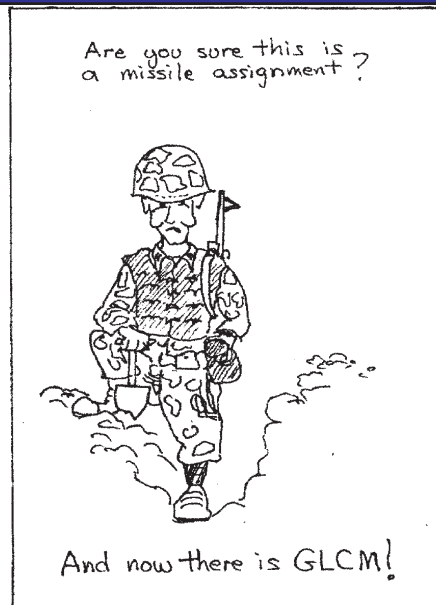
38TMW, at Wueschheim, Germany, with 80 missiles, including the 89TMS and the 38TMMS, from 1 April 1985 to 22 August 1990

303TMW, at RAF Molesworth, United Kingdom, with 64 missiles and the 87TMS, from 12 December 1986 to 31 January 1989

486TMW at Woensdrecht, the Netherlands, with 64 missiles. The wing never achieved Initial Operational Capability and no tactical or maintenance squadron was activated, from 27 August 87 to 30 September 1988

The People

The majority of the GLCM operators and maintainers came from Minuteman and Titan II wings in the states, as did much of the support leadership and security forces. Every base was unique in the way it was activated, partly because of the massive construction requirements at each base. While some, like Greenham



Bill McKee's GLCM cartoon from "Missile Business"

Common, used many existing buildings, facilities like the GAMA were new and were very large projects. Other bases, like Comiso, had no usable facilities, so there was even more construction. At Comiso, a temporary "base" was first built, with portable steel buildings (Porta-cabins) for offices, quarters, dining hall and support. Even the GAMA at Comiso transitioned from a temporary steel and concrete facility to the permanent GAMA well after the wing was activated and on alert. Many of the early assignments, especially at Comiso, were one year remote tours, and a large number of the support force were National Guard and Reserve airmen and noncommissioned officers.

Comiso was unique in another way, the Ready Merlin program. While the flights from the other wings trained at Davis Monthan and then moved to the operational bases for the mission preparation, the first flight at Comiso trained in Arizona and stayed there for several months of readiness training until the entire flight, including equipment, was airlifted to NAS Sigonella in Sicily in January 1984. The Ready Merlin folks arrived at Comiso en masse and quickly became operationally capable.

The GLCM staff at USAFE was also mostly SAC missileers, although some of the early leadership came from the acquisition field. The GLCM program office, XPG (for a while, CSG under Chief of Staff MGen David Nichols) was headed by Col Dick Stachurski initially and later by Col Lance Lord. A number of SAC missileers worked there and in other USAFE and NATO jobs.

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GLCM (Continued from Page 7)*Cutaway of the GAMA***The Protests**

The construction of six cruise missile bases had an enormous economic impact on the localities, and the well organized protests at most locations had a different impact. The UK and Sicily had the biggest protest activity, with the Greenham Women, along with many other antinuclear groups, causing lots of problems for the folks at the UK base. In Sicily, there were three major protests between July and September of 1983, but strong actions by the local police (Carabinieri and other organizations) took the "fun" out of protesting for the young folks, mostly from northern Europe, even though the Communist Party paid the protestors a daily "wage" to participate. Water cannons, clubs and tear gas take the enjoyment out of a "beach holiday", and the Italians quickly identified the leaders and made it difficult for people to come to the area. More about this activity in other stories.

Evaluations

For missileers accustomed to SAC Operational Readiness Inspections, another aspect of their life changed when they were introduced to the NATO Tactical Evaluation. The Tac Eval was a demanding two part evaluation of a unit's ability to go to war, with a short no-notice preparation phase and a much longer, demanding warfighting phase. The evaluators came from many of the NATO countries, and concealment, survival and warfighting were tested under tense simulated chemical, biological and nuclear conditions. The two phases didn't have to come in the same order every time - a wing might be scheduled for the major warfighting phase one month and have the no-notice alert phase later.

For the no-notice phase, the evaluation team (smaller than the team for the second phase) showed up

at the base and directed a full recall of personnel and transition into increased readiness conditions. My only experience with this phase was at a USAFE fighter base, but the concept was the same and the length of time it took was similar - it was a short evaluation.

On the other hand, the warfighting phase took several days, with a lot of the time spent in full chemical gear and under cover. The evaluators used exercise munitions to simulate conventional, chemical, biological and nuclear attacks on the base and the deployed flights. The primary meals during this part of the exercise were MREs, we all carried weapons and we hid under desks and in filtered shelters a lot. I missed the first Tac Eval at Comiso, even though I stayed an extra two months for it. When the team showed up on schedule in June 1984, we began the in-brief in our PortaCabin briefing room/chapel/club. Just as the USAF colonel who was team chief began, the Italian commander at Comiso, Colonel Capobianco, raised his hand. The NATO colonel stopped and asked what he wanted, and was told, "We have national elections scheduled this Sunday throughout Italy. You cannot do a Tactical Evaluation while we have elections in progress." The American colonel got a bewildered look from his scheduling officer, a missileer named LtCol Stein Cass, they conferred for a while, and then told us, "We will see you in a couple of months." So while I departed for Turkey and missed a Tac Eval in a GLCM unit, I got to experience an equally demanding evaluation in a unit with 50 F-16s that had both conventional and nuclear missions. SAC ORIs were severe tests for missile wings, but I have never heard as many explosions and lived in as much smoke as during a seven day long NATO Tac Eval.

The End of the Program

GLCM was fielded to counter the Soviet INF threat - but it was also fielded to force the Soviets out of business in this area as well as generally as a world power. It took a few years, but by the mid 1980s, INF treaty talks got serious, On 8 December 1987, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev signed the INF treaty, with NATO and the Soviets agreeing to remove all INF missiles and to verify the action with a rigid inspection program. Over the next three and a half years, the GLCM missiles were transported to Davis Monthan and destroyed. Most of us returned to duty in SAC missile wings, with a new understanding of life in the field and warfighting close to the enemy. There is no doubt that the deployment of GLCM was a turning point resulting in the end of the Cold War.

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GLCM Stories - Earlier this year, the GLCM Historical Foundation transferred its remaining members to AAFM and the foundation ceased to exist as a separate organization. Several GLCM HF members have provided GLCM stories for this and future issues.

GLCM Memories - by Col (Ret) Jarrett "Butch" McGehee, San Antonio, TX, Greenham Common base and vice wing commander

During one of the big demonstrations, I was standing at the fence watching the women walk by. Next to me was the senior NCO from the RAF Regiment, who I will not name. Suddenly, a well dressed grandmotherly lady turned to us and said, "How can you possibly kill babies." My choice was to smile and ignore, but the Sgt Major made a motion of holding a rifle and said, "You just don't lead um as much, Mam."

First Parachute Regiment (One Para) was assigned to the fence by the GAMA during another of the big demonstrations. There was a bog just north of the GAMA fence. It had rained pretty heavily the previous week and the bog was like quicksand. The Paras built a bridge over it so they could stay dry. The women didn't realize the bog was there and as they would step into it, they would sink, often to the waist. After each would sink, the One Para soldiers would hold up grading cards, like in a gymnastics meet, grading each woman as she struggled to get out of the bog.

The RAF commander and I were worried as there seemed to be a lot of conflict between the RAF Regiment and the USAF troops. We met a lot to try and figure out how to cure things and get them to integrate in the way we intended. Then one night, we got a call from the Chief of the Newbury Police. Seems RAF and USAF troops were in a less than sophisticated pub in town and some local yobos took on the USAF troops. The RAF troops came to the rescue and wiped out the locals. While we had to get a few of them out of jail, the problem went away. Maybe it never existed at all.

Return to Greenham - by Col (Ret) Randall Lanning, Howell, NJ, served at Dugway, the 501TMW and USAFE.

I completed my last trip to the United Kingdom in November 2002. It was kind of a "farewell active duty tour" in preparation for my retirement in September 2003. One of my "missions" was to fly an American flag over the two UK installations where I served 6 of my 30 years in the Air Force: RAF Chicksands (1992-95) and RAF Greenham Common (1983-85).

Visiting Greenham on that crisp Autumn day brought back a flood of memories. To look at it now, as an industrial park, one would never suspect it was a true Cold War focal point, as home to the first operational GLCM wing, the 501TMW. Although the GAMA was still there, it was completely sealed off. The runway is gone, as is the wing headquarters building where I once worked. The old control tower is still there, now with cows grazing all around it. The Manor House, once a showcase facility for the base, has reopened after a lengthy closure, as a school for the deaf. Oh yes, the peace women; they declared victory and left. I was successful in flying my American flag, albeit over the old base commander's building; the flagpole was still there!

This visit gave me great pause to reflect. You see, I taught AF history in AFROTC at Rutgers and Princeton and now do the same in high school AFJROTC. I speak with pride about my "GLCM days." I spent nearly one third of my career with that system (IOT&E team, Greenham, and HQ USAFE/DOM). I probably spent as much time with GLCM as any Air Force member. Today however, the system is just a footnote in history; no cadet I taught had ever even heard about it. I have some neat memorabilia to show them: a British MoD booklet telling the British people "Why Cruise?," a Cruise Watch spotters guide for the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, a December 1987 Batman comic book featuring a cruise missile theft from Greenham, and a British red-bordered road-sign to the base. Probably my most treasured piece is the signed Richard Wong print "Flight With Might" with all six GLCM wing patches and the IOT&E patch. Most of all, I had the privilege of meeting some great folks along the way, American, British, and German; I still keep in touch with many of them.

It's hard to believe that my time with GLCM (1979-88) began over 20 years ago. Throughout that period we were continually being challenged with the possibility of system cancellation, a tremendous push to meet Initial Operational Capability, continual buildup. First Greenham, then Comiso, Weuschheim, Florennes, and Molesworth, and finally the INF Treaty that ended deployment. Missiles never appeared at Woensdrecht. Now, the only remnant of that work is a Gryphon suspended from the ceiling in the Air Force Museum. While assigned to the IOT&E Team, I attempted to research the old Matador and Mace systems for comparative purposes. I was surprised and disappointed to find how little information was available. While in Air War College (Class of 1992), I attempted to record a

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recent history of Gryphon and compare and contrast that with Mace and Matador. I'm glad I did, as information about these systems tends to dry up fast. I guess I wrote that historical research project as a tribute to the men and women of all three systems. GLCMs did much to preserve the peace during the Cold War, and I personally believe the Gryphon and Army Pershing II provided the first cracks in the Soviet armor that eventually led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, dissolution of the Soviet Union and ultimately the end of the Cold War. I speak with pride about my time with GLCM as I'm sure other "GLCM Warriors" do.

A-10s and Tanks - by Col (Ret) Jim MacCracken,
Mbr No A1264, Peoria, AZ, who served in the 487TMW as DO

Prior to my arrival in Comiso, the 487TMW underwent a Tac Eval from NATO. Now the Tac Eval team in Europe was unlike those that most of us missile guys from the States had ever seen. The GLCM units were evaluated by US Army and German Air Force personnel who had served time in Pershing MRBM units. Being stationed in the heartland of Europe and very worried about the Fulda Gap, they were somewhat unfamiliar with procedures for deploying in Sicily.

When the practice balloon went up, the 487TMW Flight Commander, who was the on-scene commander for the road march and all activities associated with the deployment, rounded up the troops and set out for our practice deployment area which was approximately twenty five miles from the base. The deployment area was an Italian Army ammo dump which was still in use. Pretty exciting with some stray voltage flying around near leaking WWII ammo.

The roads to the deployment area were quite narrow for the most part and a big part of the Flight Commander's job was to ensure that the line of vehicles stayed intact. Sitting next to the Flight Commander, a US Army LtCol told the Flight Commander, "Captain, there are Russian tanks coming over the hill and your left." The Flight Commander, maintaining his Air Force cool replied, "Sir, respectfully, there are no Russian tanks in Sicily." The Army guy says, "Well, what would you do if there were?" Flight Commander replies, "Sir, I would call in my A-10's." Army guy says, "Captain, there are no A-10's in Sicily." Flight Commander replies, "Sir, there are as many A-10's as there are tanks." Army guy says, "Good job. Carry on." Flight Commander did, and the Tac Eval was passed with flying colors.

Some GLCM Thoughts - by Capt (Ret)

Dan Dolan, MbrNo L339, Layton, UT. Dan served in the 321SMW, 487TMW and 38TMW

Following are a few much random thoughts from my time at Comiso and Wueschheim, and GLCM in general:

I really enjoyed the opportunity to go to the field and at least be around the troops. For all exercises at Comiso and most exercises at Wueschheim, I was involved in flight generation, COMM unit generation, and resupply. Only rarely was I able to escape to the woods.

When I first saw USAFE Regulation 66-14, I thought it was SACR 66-12 with all references to launch closures removed. It was interesting to see how USAFER 66-14 evolved from the SAC concept of centralized control to a tactical, dispersed perspective.

One thing I particularly remember about Comiso was the dust which turned into that really adhesive muddy slime. Once that mud got on to your BDUs, it was almost impossible to remove. It took a lot of elbow grease to get it off vehicles also.

I was hardly young but I was a relatively inexperienced missile maintenance officer when I entered GLCM. Coming from a SAC background where you asked for guidance on what to do, it was a shock to call USAFE and be told 'just put something together and we'll be there a couple months from now to look at it.'

Is it true that there was a 3 hole golf course in the triangle between the Interim GAMA, the Luftwaffe officers' club, and porta-cabin city? A couple of the vehicle maintenance troops (MSgt Dan Hare comes to mind) and a few others who had been there from the beginning were a bit upset when we had the first on-base dispersal in that area. (*See the next article*)

Activities in the multipurpose facility at Comiso were ... unusual. Imagine having a cocktail lounge Saturday night and then coming back into the same room Sunday morning for Mass! If you were really lucky, no one was passed out in the corner.

Between the TDY at Ready Merlin and PCS to Comiso, I returned to Grand Forks to process out. Acquaintances there asked me who was running things. After I told them, the answer generally was something like "Oh? <Fill in the blank>? He's not in jail yet?" In retrospect, I think it took a fair amount of bandit mentality to get things going.

At Comiso, I had car license AFI 00033. I don't pretend to have understood the vehicle denationalization

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procedure, but I recall it somewhat complex. I much preferred having Italian license plates (using coupons of course - I had to buy gas on the economy once) rather than AFI plates. Whether I was any safer without the AFI license ID, I'm not sure

Memory fragments. Spetznaiz in Germany. Looking for undisturbed dew on your car in the morning to see if there were marks of entry. Checking under your car for wires.

When I arrived at Hahn, I was briefed that we could not make an association (even remotely) between missiles and Hahn AB/Wueschheim AS because "PYDNA" was still a US-classified location. I was looking at housing on the economy ... imagine my surprise when a German housing agent told me "Oh, you're one of the 1000 soldiers here for the Raketen..." The entire German population around us knew why we were there but we couldn't talk about it.

As part of the Ready MERLIN team, I got pretty tired of hearing "... you shudda been here when things were really tough." On my last day in Comiso, I was in the multipurpose center waiting for my ride to NAS Sigonella. I overheard a couple obviously newly arrived people complaining about base facilities. I turned to them and told them they shudda been here when things were really tough!

Comiso - the Beginning - by Col (Ret)

Charlie Simpson, AAFM Executive Director

I arrived at Comiso on 30 April 1983, after a week of briefings at USAFE headquarters and a stop in Rome to meet the embassy staff - I arrived as commander of a yet to be activated combat support group on a base that was far from ready for our use. On the day I arrived, a combined USAFE/CE and Red Horse team of two officers and ten senior NCOs was there, along with the two navy construction officers and the contract architectural company that was overseeing permanently construction. We had three majors assigned to Sigonella, one overseeing "logistics", one responsible for services and one as political affairs officer.

USAFE had discovered a few days before I arrived that the Porta-cabin complex, 45 steel buildings, was way behind schedule and we only had two weeks remaining before the first Palace Trip TDY folks would arrive. The Palace Trippers were the first couple of hundred support and security folks - some were Guard or Reserve, many were TDY from stateside bases for four to six months. They included most of our chefs, civil



Porta-cabin Construction - May 1983

engineers and security police, as well as at least part of every other office or shop.

The Porta-cabin complex included a power plant, water treatment, dining hall, offices, shops, dorms, bathrooms, laundries and a multipurpose one (chapel, club, theater, etc.). None were done on the day I arrived, but two weeks later, thanks to the efforts of the USAFE team members and a newly motivated contractor (threats do amazing things), we occupied over half of them, with the rest finished a few days later. We had no permanent buildings until more three months later.

On 4 May, I met the first permanent party people at Sigonella, and a few arrived individually by car or commercial flights. By the end of my first week at Comiso, we had a chaplain, civil engineer, security police chief, lawyer, safety officer, medic and first sergeant, as well as officers or NCOs responsible for transportation, supply, admin, finance, comm, morale and welfare, public affairs, services, contracting, firefighting and the APO. We even had a BX manager who set up the first exchange in one of the Porta-cabins. We served the first meal in the dining hall that day to the new arrivals. A week later, we had over 100 officers and NCOs to start setting up a complete base support organization. We also had a couple of hundred short term TDY folks who came for specific tasks, like setting up the telephone system. Most of the PCS folks lived in apartments and hotels in the area, some as far as 30 miles away. We set up a contract bus operation that shuttled people between work and home. Many Palace Trip people and a few of us who were permanent party lived in the Porta-cabins, some twelve to a room.

A couple of weeks later, 55 lucky folks got to take a day off and take bus to Sigonella for real shopping, while the rest of us stayed home and built recreation facilities - a softball field, volley ball court, horseshoe pits, basketball court, tennis court and even a three hole golf

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Comiso's first Golf Tourney, May 1983

course. We worked hard, sometimes six and seven days a week, but we played hard, too. On Memorial Day, 30 days after I arrived, we had a softball tournament, a golf tournament and a picnic for both American and Italian workers and the Italian family members. We were growing both in number of people and facilities quickly.

By June, many of the missile operations and maintenance personnel not part of Ready Merlin (the entire flight that would be deployed from Arizona to Sicily later in the year) began arriving in preparation for activation of the 487TMW. Dormitories, maintenance facilities and the rec center were nearing completion. The PCS population was rapidly growing, but we still had a couple of hundred TDY people here, including many Comm people working on a wide variety of comm systems. The interim command post, part of the interim GAMA, was rapidly coming together, and the Italian AF was adding people and facilities just as rapidly. We also had General Dynamics and McDonnell Douglas contractors settling in, the only people allowed to bring families with them. The first of our civilian employees also were arriving. We were rapidly becoming a "real" Air Force base.

We had a number of general officer and civilian leadership (congress) visitors in the first few weeks, but the most important came on 30 June 1983. That morning, Gen Billy Minter, USAFE Commander in Chief, arrived by Italian AF helicopter along with a number of other general officers and key civilians. I escorted Gen Minter to the center "courtyard" of our Porta-cabin complex, where the 487TMW was activated. Col Tom Bowen accepted the unfurled wing flag from Gen Minter and the GLCM wing in Europe was officially in business. Gen Minter spent several hours meeting with the enlisted folks who had gotten this new base up and running, and toured our limited facilities. The next step would be to realize initial operational capability upon arrival of the Ready Merlin flight in a few months. We had done a lot in two months, but we had a whole lot more to do.

Summer in southern Sicily isn't quite the Sahara, but it is close - because the Sahara is close, too. We had temperatures as high as 126 degrees and air so full of dust and sand you could taste and see it. On one of the hottest weekends of July, we had our first major protest. The Anarchistas, along with a collection of unsavory characters that including the Greenham women, members of radical Arab organizations and other communist inspired groups, surrounded the base and stopped all access for three days. On the third day, the Italian police official in charge of the area finally deployed his riot squad and brought out the clubs and tear gas - but the protestors disappeared amazingly fast. We had two more major protests, one in August and the last in September, before they either the Communist Party ran out of money to pay them or they got tired of tear gas, water cannons and clubs.

The most visible landmark at Comiso was the large non-NATO standard orange and white water tower. Every new building on base was being finished in earth tones for low visibility - the water tower could be seen for miles. A day after we accepted the first dorm, the rec center and the maintenance facility from the contractor, the two foot diameter water main at the base of the tower ruptured, dumping all one million gallons of water and creating a temporary Lake Comiso. The engineers were concerned that the sudden main break had undermined the footings for the tower and were afraid it might tip over - it didn't - but a leaning "Tower of Comiso" became one of the symbols of the base for our resident cartoonist. That, combined with the mud everywhere once the rainy season began, became unofficial trademarks. Our resident cartoonist, who was featured in each weekly issue of the "Comiso Columns", had the tower in the background of many of his cartoons.

Besides the protest activity, we also had a constant concern about terrorism. Only a few months before we began work on the base, the Red Brigade had



The Tower

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Alert (Continued from Page 12)

kidnapped a US Army general, and there were numerous terrorist attacks around Italy, both assassinations and bombings in public places. One of our civilian local national employees narrowly missed death when terrorists attacked the TWA counter at the Rome airport. We got continuing intel briefs about the terrorist situation, and the shooting in Rome of the US Ambassador to the Sinai was a definite delaying factor in the approval of families for our base. The staff cars that the wing and base commanders drove were not white-topped blue US sedans, although we had a couple of these on base. I drove a different rental car each month - we changed colors, makes and models to avoid identifying any one car as a "senior staff vehicle." Remember that the mid-1980s were the time of the hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship and a number of airliners, as well as several bombings of places where US military gathered both in Germany and Greece.

Speaking of cars, of course, most of the PCS people (me included) insisted on buying cars from the locals. We weren't allowed to ship vehicles, although a couple of my senior NCOs managed to - one had a big white Cadillac and the other a recreational vehicle. I bought a used Alfa Romeo sedan and then experienced the Italian system of auto registration. Since I was one of the first with a car, I had to use the system at Sigonella. SMSgt Bob Quay drove my car to Palermo in a caravan of other vehicles owned by AF and Navy folks. There, he was required to park in a white square at the port to "ship the car back to the US." He then drove it back to Comiso with the Italian plates. A few days later, I got a call that "my car had arrived from the US" so Bob drove it to Catania port, and parked in another white square. An Italian authority installed my AFI license plate and

now I had a denationalized car. For all this, we got to pay about \$500. I worked on a better system for Comiso, which ended up being a procedure where the owner brought the car to the base and watched the car being loaded on an auto transporter and hauled away. The next day, the transporter showed up with the cars with the new AFI plates, and it only cost \$250.

The early days of GLCM were an exciting time, as was the entire short life of the system. We ended up closing some of the units well before they were fully manned or equipped. Even at Comiso, in 1991, eight years after I arrived, many of the "start-up" tasks were still incomplete. I returned to Comiso in May 1991 for the closing ceremony, along with Col Tom Bowen, the first wing commander. We were both proud to see the "real Air Force Base" that had grown from our dusty (or muddy, depending on the month) beginnings in 1983, but it was sad to see the whole thing closed down. But that sadness was minor compared to the feeling we had about accomplishing the real mission of GLCM - the Soviet Union was crumbling and the Cold War was over. Former Secretary of the Air Force Tom Reed, one of our members, quotes former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Jack Vessey in his great book, "At the Abyss." In response to Reed's question about his biggest contribution to prevailing in the Cold War, Vessey replied, "The actual deployment of the intermediate range nuclear forces to Europe in 1983."

More about GLCM

AAFM Newsletters

July and December 1994, Two Part Review of GLCM

June 1999, GLCM Vets and the Gulf War

December 1999, GLCM Guidance System

Sept 2004, GLCM and AAFM

Other Publications

"At the Abyss, An Insider's History of the Cold War" by Thomas Reed, 2004, Presidio Press

The Ground Launched Cruise Missile" by Capt Mark Nelson, Oklahoma City ALC, 2002

Web pages

www.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/22/greenham/index.htm for both sides of the Greenham experience

www.megspace.com/politics/greenham/index.htm, Jonathan Sayer's site

www.afmissileers.org

www.glcmmhf.org, for the GLCM Historical Foundation

home.wi.rr.com/g lcm/g lcm.htm

web.archive.org/web/20040202181356/

www.stdcomp.com/485tmw

The Missile and Space Organizations - Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC)

History - SMC traces its ancestry to the Western Development Division (WDD) of the Air Research and Development Command (ARDC). WDD, activated on 1 July 1954, was redesignated the AF Ballistic Missile Division (AFBMD) on 1 June 1957. The organization's original mission was to develop strategic missiles for the AF, but ARDC added the responsibility for developing the first military satellite system on 10 October 1955. The responsibility for strategic missiles remained with AFBMD and its successors through the decades that followed, but the Department of Defense continued to modify and add to its assignment of the responsibility for the space mission. In February 1958, the Eisenhower administration activated the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) and placed it in charge of all military space programs during their research and development phases. In September 1959, ARPA lost its dominant role, and Secretary of Defense McElroy divided responsibilities for developing military satellites among the three services. The Army was to develop communication satellites; the Navy, navigation satellites; and the AF, reconnaissance and surveillance satellites. Only the AF was to develop and launch military space boosters. This arrangement continued until March 1961, when Secretary of Defense McNamara gave the AF a near monopoly on development of all military space systems, ending the role of the Army and the Navy except under exceptional circumstances. By 1961, AFBMD had two parallel missions to perform, but it was not necessarily clear that the two missions belonged together. Over the next several decades, in fact, the missile and space functions were separated and rejoined repeatedly, causing numerous reorganizations and redesignations. Because of the increasing importance of space systems, the space and missile functions were separated on 1 April 1961, when AFBMD was inactivated and replaced by the Ballistic Systems Division (BSD) and the

Space Systems Division (SSD). On 1 July 1967, the space and missile functions were reconsolidated in the interest of economy, and BSD and SSD were merged to form the Space and Missile Systems Organization (SAMSO). Space and missile functions were separated a second time on 1 October 1979, when SAMSO was divided into the Space Division and the Ballistic Missile Office. These two organizations were redesignated Space Systems Division (SSD) and Ballistic Systems Division (BSD) on 15 March 1989. By the early 1990s, missile programs were being cut back because the cold war had ended, and a final series of redesignations and realignments brought the space and missile functions together for a third time. On 5 May 1990, BSD was redesignated the Ballistic Missile Organization (BMO) and realigned under SSD. On 1 July 1992, SSD was redesignated the Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC), the name it bears today. Finally, in September 1993, BMO was inactivated and absorbed by SMC, recreating the situation that had existed in the 1950s and again in the 1970s, when a single organization was responsible for both space and missile programs.

The Unit and Mission - SMC, a subordinate unit of AFSPC is the center of technical excellence for researching, developing and purchasing military space systems. The center is also responsible for on-orbit check-out, testing, sustainment and maintenance of military satellite constellations and other Department of Defense space systems. Major programs and significant functions include NAVSTAR Global Positioning System, MILSATCOM Space Based Infrared System, Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle, Launch Programs (Titan, Atlas, Delta), Defense Meteorological Satellite Program, Satellite and Launch Control System, Defense Support Program.

SMC Today - Located at Los Angeles Air Force Base in El Segundo, CA., four miles south of Los Angeles International Airport. The center has an annual total budget in excess of \$6.5 billion and employs 1,575 military members, 1,152 civilians and an estimated 900 contractors worldwide. It manages between \$50 and \$60 billion in contracts at any one time.

The Missile and Space Organizations - 341st Space Wing



History - The 341st Bombardment Group (Medium) activated on 15 September 1942, equipped with B-25 Mitchell bombers. The group entered combat early in 1943 and operated chiefly against enemy transportation movements in central Burma from bases in India. They moved to China in January 1944, engaged primarily in sea sweeps and attacks against inland shipping in French Indo-China and the China coast. The group inactivated on 2 November 1945 after returning to the US. In December 1946, the unit reactivated as the 341BG (Light) at Westover Field, MA., and served as a reserve component of the Air Defense Command at Dow Field, ME. This unit inactivated in June 1949. It was reactivated as the 341BG (Medium) in September 1955 at Dyess AFB, TX, flying B-47s and KC-97s. The unit inactivated once more in June 1961. On 25 June 1961, the 341st Bombardment Wing was redesignated the 341st Strategic Missile Wing (ICBM-Minuteman) and activated at Malmstrom AFB, MT on 1 July 1961. A year later, in late July 1962, the first Minuteman ICBM arrived at Malmstrom and was placed at A-09 launch facility. The 10SMS was activated on 1 November 1961. The 12SMS and 490SMS were activated in March and May 1962. President John F. Kennedy referred to the 10SMS as America's "Ace in the Hole", a name that remains with the nation's first Minuteman unit to this day. On 3 July 1963, the Wing and all three squadrons became operational and two years later added the 564SMS, equipped with Minuteman II missiles. Under force modernization the rest of the wing followed suit, replacing the Minuteman I with the newer Minuteman II.

The Unit and Mission - In 1975, the 564SMS switched from the Minuteman II to the Minuteman III. In November 1975, the wing began an integrated improvement program that included command data buffer and an improved launch control system. In 1985, the 341SMW became the lead unit in the Minuteman Inte-

grated Life Extension program (Rivet Mile). On 1 September 1991, the wing was redesignated the 341st Missile Wing. The START I Treaty mandated the removal of all Minuteman II missiles. On 13 November 1991, site J-03 became the first to have its missile removed. As missiles were removed, a new program called Rivet Add was launched. Rivet Add modified MMII silos to facilitate MMIII missiles transferred from the 321MW, inactivating at Grand Forks AFB, ND. The 341MW finished installation of the Rapid Execution and Combat Targeting (REACT) in February 1996 as the first complete overhaul of the command and control equipment utilized by the missile officers in the Launch Control Facilities (LCFs). On 12 June 1998, the wing, now called the 341SW, completed conversion of its alert missiles to a full complement of 200 Minuteman III ICBMs, as the last transfer from Grand Forks resulted in the inactivation of the 321MG. The 341SW was the first wing to put a Minuteman III on alert with an upgraded guidance system as technicians installed the first NS-50 under the Guidance Replacement Program at Malmstrom in August 1999. The 341SW also installed the first ICBM with remanufactured boosters under the Propulsion Replacement Program (PRP), in launch facility Hotel-02, on 17 April 2001.

341SW Today - The 341SW is made up of a wing staff and four groups - the 341st Operations Group, 341st Maintenance Group, 341st Mission Support Group and 341st Medical Group. The 200 Minuteman III missiles are controlled from 20 underground missile alert facilities located on 23,000 square miles of high plains of Montana under the control of the 10MS, 12MS, 490MS and 564MS. The wing maintains host wing duties at the base with a military population of over 3,500 and 700 civilians.



A Word from the Association

Milestones - Your association enters its thirteenth year of operation at the start of 2005 - a feat that many didn't expect to see. I have talked to a number of our fellow missileers who didn't join AAFM because "it won't be around very long." As of the end of 2004, more than 2,800 missileers have become members, including a good mix of active duty and retired/discharged missileers, as well as those from every level of experience and rank, from one stripe airmen to four star officers. You, the members, continue to make it possible for us to support Space Command recognition programs, the annual missile and space competition, museum displays, other recognition programs, a fantastic art project and a newsletter that is great only because so many of you provide your personal stories. In addition, you and AAFM have encouraged and facilitated reunions, had seven great National Meetings, participated in ICBM Heritage Days and assisted numerous authors, researchers and television producers document our history. And we do it all with a volunteer staff and an annual budget of only about \$40,000.

Travels and March Newsletter - I will be in Europe from 14 March to 4 April, so the March issue may be a few days later than it should be. We will continue our GLCM series and I already have some stories, but can use more - get your's in now so we can cover the history of this short-lived system in detail.

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Association of Air Force Missileers

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aafm@afmissileers.org www.afmissileers.org 970-453-0500

More Members - There are still a lot of missileers out there who don't belong to AAFM - and each of you know several. Work on your friends - get them involved in our organization. I still get two or three calls or e-mails a week from missileers, past and present, who just found out about us. There are a lot of active duty folks who should be members - and even more missileers who have retired or left the AF who ought to be in our ranks.

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.

4300SS - I am trying to find more of the history of the 4300th Support Squadron at Vandenberg. For part of the time we were part of the 576SMS, at others a separate unit involved in missile testing. Would appreciate contact with anyone who was in the unit or knows about our history. Dale Sandberg, MbrNo A2315, Selma OR, e-mail edmf@frontiernet.net, phone 541-597-4821

Minuteman Power Systems - My brother has bought a Minuteman LF diesel to use for power and is looking for information about the system - we don't want to hook it up until we understand a little about it. Ron Goats, 501-977-0764, ronliz@cox-internet.com

Info about Relatives - I am in search of information regarding my deceased father's military connection with the Atlas E missile between 1950 and 1964 in California. As I understand he may have been a Crew Chief but I am not certain. He retired from the Air Force in 1966 at Maxwell AFB, as a Major. He was Dr. Richard Joseph Ovington and also went Dick. When he died, he was Senior Coordinator for Civil Air Patrol at National HQ at Maxwell AFB. He was, primarily, a communication skills platform instructor. Any help you can offer me in reaching a contact person who may know what he did with the project would be appreciated. It is of great interest to me; I have fond memories of him building model rockets with me. Joy Ovington, 7053 Horner Avenue, St Louis, MO 63117, phone 314-348-2569, e-mail joyovington@yahoo.com

My father was Charles Tipton, nicknamed "Tip" He served in the 381MIMS at McConnell between 1960 and 1966, and I believe he retired January 1966 as SSgt. He enlisted in Army right after WWII and served with Air Sea Rescue around Japan/Korea. He served in Korea (2 tours I think). My problem is I have his DD214's, but that doesn't tell me what he did. The National Records

(Continued on Page 14)

Letters (Continued from Page 2)

Center says his files were lost in a fire. Any information would be welcome. *Franklin B. Tipton, TSgt, USAFRES, Ret, e-mail ftipton@cox.net*

Comp Patches - I am interested in purchasing/trading patches from Curtain Raiser (1967) and Olympic Arena (1972 and 1973) to complete a collection being displayed at the Northrop Grumman (Newport Rd) office in Colorado Springs. *Monte Watts, MbrNo XXXX, Colorado Springs, CO, e-mail montewatts70@earthlink.net*

Atlas Manuals I am trying to locate Dash Ones for Atlas D and E for research my company, HydroGeoLogic, is doing. Thanks to AAFM for the CDs with Atlas F and Titan I publications and the suggestion to visit the Titan museum. *Jeffrey Hampson, e-mail jhampson@hgl.com*

Cold War Veterans Association Launches Cold War Victory Medal Petition

The only national veterans service organization recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs that represents specifically the interests of America's Cold War veterans, The Cold War Veterans Association (CWVA), announced their campaign to deliver to President Bush a signed petition urging him to honor our nation's Cold War Veterans appropriately. "The creation of the Cold War Victory Medal follows the long established tradition of our nation's military to honor those veterans who have served our nation proudly and sacrificed to secure our victory in times of war," said Vince Milum, Chairman, CWVA. "The Cold War was our nation's longest war and those veterans who served during that war have never been appropriately honored by our country for the victory they achieved over the Soviet Union and their communist bloc." The CWVA does not recognize the Cold War Certificate issued by the DoD. The certificate does not follow established military tradition and is not a strictly military award. "The certificate can be issued to a civilian worker who never had the potential to engage or confront the enemy, and can even be given to government nondefense workers who avoided military service." said Frank Tims, CWVA Public Affairs Director, "In every global military operation our nation has undertaken since WWI where a victory was achieved, a suitable victory medal has been created for all military veterans who served during the conflict. Why

should veterans of the Cold War who achieved our victory over the Soviet Union not be entitled to the same time-honored treatment?" The CWVA's petition seeks to correct misconceptions about our nation's Cold War as a war that was won without firing a shot. The petition lays out the case for the victory medal and the two other Presidential action items; proclaiming a national Cold War Victory Day and inclusion of the Cold War as an official military operation of the United States, by citing official government sources for killed-in-action, wounded-in-action, and missing-in-action statistics. The initial on-line version of the petition is being hosted by a nonpartisan organization, The Petition Site, and we are encouraging anyone who supports our nation's veterans to go to www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/172944628 to add their signature and comments. We also encourage everyone to pass the word around about our efforts to others who may be similarly interested. A printable version of the petition with instructions is available for download from the CWVA websites for those people who want to extend the petition into their local neighborhoods. For further information about the CWVA and their efforts to support all Cold War Veterans, or to contact a CWVA representative in your area, please visit our national website at www.coldwarveterans.com. The CWVA welcomes media inquiries and will respond to all legitimate requests. The CWVA is a non-partisan, nonprofit 501(c)(19) national veterans service organization recognized by the . Dept. of Veterans Affairs and is not affiliated with, or responsible for the content, the advertisements, the views expressed by, or any other actions of Care2.com Inc., thepetitionsite.com, or their affiliated websites or business entities.

Taps for Missileers

LtCol (Ret) Iceal (Gene) Hambleton, who was in Titan I in the 569SMS, Titan II in the 390SMW and Hq SAC, and lived in Tucson, passed away. The book and film "BAT 21" were based on Gene's escape, evasion and rescue after being shot down in Viet Nam.

LtCol (Ret) Kenneth "Stick" Stevens, who was a Minuteman maintenance officer in the 341SMW, and lived in Montana

LtCol (Ret), Donald Vriezelaar, an AAFM member, served in the 321SMW in Minuteman, lived in Prosperity, SC
Col (Ret) Wells Hunt, an AAFM member, served in Atlas in the 551SMS, in Titan II in the 390SMW, in 1STRAD, Hq SAC and the Pentagon, lived in South Yarmouth, MA.

Art Project (Continued from Page 4)



Darrell and Gen Lord

the size and permanent display location finalized, and Darrell began work on the piece. He had discovered a special glass called dichroic glass, which provided a spectacular appearance when lit from different angles. As work progressed on the mosaic this spring and early summer, the AAFM executive director and AFSPC representatives met with him to review the progress. He joined us at our National Meeting in Omaha and briefed the attendees on the project. He completed the work in midsummer and we began work on the installation and dedication.

The mosaic is shown on the AAFM website at www.afmissileers.org, and you can see Darrell's art at www.darrellanderson.com. We are also investigating the possibility of having a limited number of signed prints of the work available for members.

This project, which is planned to be the first of many, was completed at a cost of \$30,000. We have received a number of donations from members for the project, but need more to fully cover the cost of the effort. You can donate by sending a check to AAFM, PO Box 5693, Breckenridge, CO 80424, or going to our web site and use a credit card. Indicate that the donation is for the Art Project and include any names for special recognition. We will publish a special issue of the newsletter recognizing all those who contribute. You can also make a donation in memory of a family member or friend or in recognition of a unit, event or other item - we will give special recognition to those donations. Send in your "Art Project" donation now.



Darrell and Friends

A Special Thanks from Gen Lord and AFSPC

The note below, dated 24 Nov 2004, was sent to the AAFM president by Gen Lord. The highlighted entries reflect Gen Lord's handwritten additions.

Dear General Kelley

Thank you for contributing the Mosaic of "Countdown, 5-4-3-2-1" to Air Force Space Command. It will be cherished by all who view its beauty. The mosaic's intricate design and captivating colors truly capture the many facets of the command as we embrace the future.

Once again, thank you for the *outstanding contribution* and the association's continuous commitment to the men and women of Air Force Space Command.

Wow!

Sincerely,

Lance W. Lord, General, USAF, Commander



The Unveiling

Darrell Anderson's Comments

The dedication of Countdown, 5-4-3-2-1 was engaging to say the least! From the beginning, Charlie Simpson has been the creative force behind this artistic adventure. The adulation that I received when I entered the Air Force Space Command headquarters was overwhelming. Commanding Gen Lance Lord, Retired Gen Jay Kelly and Charlie inundated me with accolades that almost brought me to tears.

Let me just say that collaboration with this group of men and women has set precedent of what I want to continue to aspire to in expanding my life. Little did I know that retired Colonel Charlie Simpson understood the where with all to weave together the fabric of this successful artist adventure.

ICBM Heritage Day

On 9 November, the third annual ICBM Heritage Day was conducted at AFSPC headquarters. AAFM, the Missile Systems Group of the Lance Sijan AFA chapter and AFSPC/DRM jointly sponsored the day long event, attended by over 100 AAFM members and AFSPC staff members.

Presentations included SAMSO Perspectives on BMO Acquisition by MGen (Ret) Ralph Tourino, GLCM Development and Operations by Gen Lance Lord, Small ICBM by MGen (Ret) Howard Mitchell, Air Staff Perspective on MX Basing Modes by Col (Ret) Ken Van Dillen, Missile Forces Transition from SAC to AFSPC by LtGen (Ret) Dirk Jameson, MMII/MMIII Spin-up and Integration by LtGen (Ret) Jay Kelley and SAC Operations by Col (Ret) Dave Sears. Col Rick Patenaude, AFSPC/DRM, opened the session and Gayle White, the local AFA chapter president, closed it. The attendees also participated in the AAFM art project dedication ceremony.

That evening, more than 150 AAFM members and AFSPC staff members attended a dinner at the Peterson club, with Gen Lord as the featured speaker. This annual event has proven to be an excellent vehicle to keep the young men and women currently involved in ICBM programs current on the history of missile development.



New Missile and Space badge

AFSPC unveiled a new space badge at the Strategic Space 2004 Convention in Omaha. The new badge, part of AFSPC's senior leadership's continuing vision and push to unite the command's missions and specialties, will replace the current Space and Missile functional badge, worn by both space and missile operations professionals, and the missile operations occupational badge, more commonly known as "the pocket rocket," currently worn by those in the missile operations career field.

Part of the continuing effort to bring the missile and space disciplines together, the badge has received mixed reviews, as expected. The missile badge has been part of the uniform for almost fifty years, and missileers have expressed concern about losing the distinctive badge, including hundreds of comments on a web site this year.

The initial press releases by AFSPC have not spelled out details on whether the missile badge with operations designator can still be worn by those who have earned it. Missile maintenance people will still wear the original badge now called the Missile Maintenance badge.

It will be several months before the badge is actually on the shelf. The badge still needs to be processed through the Air Force uniform board, Institute of Heraldry and be mass-produced by the manufacturers. No date has been set for mandatory wear, and details on wear are not yet available.

AAFM will keep you informed on the new badge. We have been involved in this issue since it was first announced in early summer, and provided feedback, recommendations and comments to AFSPC during the decision process.

AAFM President Comments on New Badge

The Air Force has announced a new missile and space badge. While this is clearly a departure from the badge that is tattooed on the hearts and in the minds of most of us, General Lance Lord included, it is indicative of a "future" and not the past. AAFM will always embrace the pocket rockets we earned but now we also need to begin to understand and support this new badge that the next generation will proudly wear. The career field that we so proudly and competently established is now part of a new Air Force, thus this badge represents far more than the mission which challenged us. Let's all be sure to support this new generation while always standing tall and confident regarding our mission and the pocket rockets we proudly wear.

Jay Kelley LtGen, USAF (Ret) President, AAFM

Reunions

AAFM will meet in Cheyenne 27 Sept to 1 Oct 2006, at the Little America Hotel and Resort -details later

TAC Missileers - Nashville, TN, 1-3 June 2005, Airport Embassy Suites Tel 615-871-0033, contact Joe Perkins, 904-282-9064, e-mail perkster@fcsl.com

551SMS (Atlas) - 20-23 April 2005, Fairborn Holiday Inn, Dayton, Ohio, contact Ken Fisher at 718-792-2360, e-mail sms551@aol.com

308SMW - anyone interested in participating in a reunion of the Little Rock Titan II wing, possibly with AAFM at Cheyenne in 2006, contact William Leslie at William.Leslie2@wpafb.af.mil