

Association of Air Force Missileers AAFM Newsletter

"Victors in the Cold War"

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The "Comp" - 40 Years Old and still Going

2007 - the 60th anniversary of the U. S. Air Force, the 25th Anniversary of AF Space Command and the 40th anniversary of the space and missile competition - this issue recognizes these anniversaries with stories and articles from comps past, as well as a word from the current, and outgoing, commander of AF Space Command. Gen Chilton will soon move to Omaha to become Commander, U. S. Strategic Command. AAFM offers a special thanks to Barry Spink at the AF Historical Research Agency and Jeffrey Geiger, the Vandenberg historian.



Gen Chilton during the 2006 GC visit to a Skysox game, the AFSPC 25th Anniversary logo, Curtain Raiser Headquarters, Patch and 341 SMW Target and Alignment Team



Competing Every Day to be the Best

- by General Kevin P. Chilton, Commander, Air Force Space Command

Our Nation places special trust and confidence in those of us in the space and missile business. Whether it's maintaining and securing nuclear weapon systems or acquiring, launching and operating billion dollar satellites or surveilling the heavens, the American people deserve nothing but the best and we must deliver excellence everyday. One way to ensure our high standards is through competition. As we reflect on the 60th anniversary of our Air Force and the 25th anniversary of Air Force Space Command, competition stands out as playing a central role in space and missiles since the very beginning, and rightly so. Competition enables excellence and is a key element in our quest to be the best. It improves our discipline, hones our skills and drives us to do better. In short, competition is an essential factor in fulfilling the vision for this command
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From Curtain Raiser to Guardian Challenge

- by Col (Ret) Charlie Simpson, Executive Director, AAFM

It started 40 years ago and it was called Curtain Raiser - the first Space and Missile Competition - except then it was called the Strategic Air Command Missile Combat Competition - with only ICBM wings competing - there were no space wings in those days. It started small, with two missile crews and a targeting team representing each of the six Minuteman and three Titan II wings. There was no comp in 1968 due to the
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The Mission of the Association of Air Force Missileers -

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

Chilton - (Continued from Page 1)

to be the acknowledged experts and leaders in fielding, launching and employing space power for the 21st century.

Our Nation was engaged in a monumental competition during the Cold War after the Soviet Union tested a hydrogen bomb in August 1953 and later demonstrated the ability to deliver nuclear weapons with long-range bombers. In response, the Air Force established the Western Development Division (WDD) to accelerate the development of its ballistic missiles. However, the Soviets sprinted ahead by achieving the successful launch of the world's first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in August 1957. Then two months later, they placed the first man-made satellite in orbit, Sputnik, kicking off a space race that also pitted two competing ideologies against each other.

Over fifty years ago, it was the vision and hard work of General "Bennie" Schriever and team at the WDD which led to the fielding of our Nation's first intermediate-range, then intercontinental ballistic missiles as well as the satellite systems necessary to see behind the Iron Curtain. By October 1962, the Cold War competition came to the brink during the Cuban Missile Crisis. At this time a new generation ICBM, the Minuteman, helped stare down the communist threat. It was Alpha Flight in the 10th Missile Squadron at Malmstrom AFB that President Kennedy referred to as "America's First Ace in the Hole." While the Cold War threat has subsided, AFSPC continues to provide a combat ready nuclear deterrent force and unrivaled space capabilities for today's uncertain world. Our Airmen, deployed abroad or operating from their home stations, compete every minute of every day to provide global vigilance, reach and power for our Nation. One of the ways we demonstrate the training and readiness of our Airmen is by conducting the Guardian Challenge space and missile competition.

In 1967, the Air Force and Strategic Air Command instituted the spirit of competition by opening its first missile combat competition, named "Curtain Raiser." Back then, two combat crews from each intercontinental ballistic missile wing and a combat targeting and alignment team competed to determine who was the best of the best. Forty years later, with an expanded field of competition, teams now contend for the Blanchard Trophy for Best ICBM Wing, the Aldridge Trophy for Best Space Operations Wing and the Schriever Trophy for Best Space Launch Wing.

Guardian Challenge not only sharpens the combat skills of those in the missile field, but also reinforces and

improves the operational proficiency of our operators, maintainers, communication specialists, security forces and pilots. The competition raises the bar not only for those who seek the challenge, but also for those who participate as trainers and evaluators. Everyone benefits when our best take back what they learn to their units. Setting the bar high challenges others to do even better next time. I look forward to seeing who will be the best this summer at GC 2008.

However, periodic competitions like GC are not enough to deter our adversaries. Our daily readiness and demonstrated combat capability send a clear signal that we are ready to defend America. Every crew changeover, maintenance dispatch, satellite contact, convoy, launch and flight test sends the message that our space and ICBM force is ready. With over 98% of the Minuteman III force ready for launch within minutes, we enable our Joint Force to conduct operations from peace through crisis and war. Because we stand alert, AFSPC has the freedom to integrate and deliver precise and increasingly vital space effects to support the joint fight in the Global War on Terrorism.

Our leaders recognize the importance of a safe, reliable and secure strategic deterrent and the critical role it plays in protecting our country now and in the future. The Air Force Chief of Staff, General Moseley, called our ICBM forces our Nation's "strategic backstop." To maintain that backstop, we are modernizing the Minuteman III propulsion and guidance systems while simultaneously improving our launch and alert facilities. To continue to provide a reliable and effective force, we are committed to modernize 500 missiles while we draw down to a baseline of 450 operational missiles. Additionally, our increasing dependence on space demands we preserve and expand our technological advantage by recapitalizing space systems used to support military operations such as the Global Positioning System, satellite communications and missile warning.

All of these efforts, our historical accomplishments, our competitions and our modernization programs, would not be possible without what continues to be our most valuable asset, our people. Entrusted with the most powerful weapons ever invented and the most technically complex systems ever conceived, they have answered a call of great responsibility to live up to the high standards expected of us by our Air Force and our Country. These expectations demand that we constantly hone our discipline and attention to detail. We must compete every day to be the best.

Competition - (Continued from Page 2)



1969 308 SMW team with Miss Arkansas

pressures of the war in Viet Nam, but SAC decided the following year that an event was needed to recognize and motivate the relatively new missile force, and Olympic Arena began. It has continued ever since, transitioning from a SAC event to an Air Combat Command event for 1993, and then became the Air Force Space Command Space and Missile Competition, Guardian Challenge, in 1994, when the missile wings joined the space wings in AFSPC. It was cancelled in 2003 and 2005 due to the war in Iraq and budget constraints, and it was moved to Peterson AFB in Colorado for 2006, then changed to a "every two year" event so no comp was held in 2007, with the next scheduled for 2008 either at Peterson or Vandenberg.

In 1969, the event grew a little, with two combat crews and two maintenance teams from each wing. OA 69 saw serious scorepostings with no narrator, and a formal award ceremony with what we then called Class A blues, commendation medals for crews and teams that won 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 0700, following the midnight scoreposting. But there were no



mascoots, cheerleaders or noisemakers. Little Rock did bring Miss Arkansas, and the famous .Sooooeee, root, root, root..... cheer was heard a lot.

The makeup of the wing teams evolved and changed many times over the next few years. In 1970, more varieties of missile maintenance teams meant larger wing contingents. Security police teams became part of the event in 1975, and for the first time, females competed as team members. In 1976, civil engineering and communications maintenance teams were added. By 1977 there were 30 wing or team trophies in addition to the Blanchard. In 1982, the name Olympic Arena was dropped - the event was just called the Missile Combat Competition. In 1984 there were only two Titan wings left to compete, and the term Olympic Arena was reinstated for 1986, and Titan wings competed for the last time. In 1987, for the 20th anniversary, the event was called Olympic Shield, but Olympic Arena was back in use the next year. 1988 marked the first year female operations competitors - for the first time, crews were also randomly selected for the event.

In 1993, a new command was the host - ICBM wings had moved to Air Combat Command with the demise of SAC, so Gen Michael Loh, ACC commander, was the new host. It was also the last year for Olympic Arena. The following year, Air Force Space Command was the home of the six Minuteman wings, and the command restructured the event into the Space and Missile Competition, with the space wings at Patrick, Vandenberg and Peterson joining the competition. The event was changed to a squadron level competition, with the Blanchard Trophy for the best missile operations squadron, the Leffler Trophy for the best missile maintenance squadron and the Chennault Trophy for the best space operations squadron and the Powers and Randerson Trophies for the best space and missile communications units. The security police didn't compete in 1994, but returned in 1995, and helicopters also joined the comp. The 44

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Minot's 1976 display and the Bicentennial Patch



1981 Mascots

Competition - (Continued from Page 3)

MW at Ellsworth deactivated in 1994, and the 351 MW at Whiteman competed for the last time. For 1995, the Blanchard remained the award for the best missile operations squadron, but new space trophies appeared. The O'Malley Trophy went to the test space warning team, the Arnold Trophy to the best space surveillance team, the Schriever Trophy for the best spacelift team and the Aldridge Trophy for the best satellite operations team.

In 1998, Guardian Challenge returned to a wing competition with the missile wings competing for the Blanchard, and the space wings for the Aldridge for best space operations wing and the Schriever for best spacelift wing. In 2000, missile site chefs competed for the first time. For the 2006 event, competitors gathered at Peterson for the final events, but only the security forces competed there - all the other competitive exercises were conducted at each unit's home base.

Wing display booths, unit pins and stickers and team uniforms were barely visible in 1969, but 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. 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 351 MW 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



Sesto Auditorium at score posting, MPT Exercise

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 321 SMW, 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 390 SMW "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

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1979 blanchard Winners and Scoreboard



Guardian Challenge Stage - 2004

Competition - (Continued from Page 4)

*The Blanchard
Winners in 2006,
Malmstrom*

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 and athletes 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 began to take a separate aircraft just to transport the displays. SAC 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 club with contractor and other displays.

Scoreposting has evolved from a twice-a-day, formal, quiet event 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, Maj Gen 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 still recognized just as it was in 1967.

Curtain Raiser Scripts - by Maj (Ret) Carl

King, MbrNo A0217, Surprise, AZ

For Curtain Raiser in 1967 the 4315 CCTS selected Capt Grover Jefferson and me, a very junior captain, to operate the Minuteman II Missile Procedures Trainer (MPT). At that time the MPT was not computerized; each status light had to be manually illuminated or turned off, and status printouts were generated by punch cards through a card reader in the MPT operator's "cab." The anticipated speed that the competitors would process checklists called for two MPT operators to provide as much realism as possible because at times one would be on the phone while the other would be changing status lights or feeding punch cards into the card reader.

3901 SMES evaluators Darrell Downing and Dave Sevel provided us with scripts for each exercise and manned the crew positions for proofing and establishing timelines for each event. Early in this testing period the Sevel was called away and I found myself in the DMCCC chair working with Darrell to test the scripts and set new timelines. We ran each exercise script many times, fine tuning them and constantly improved our completion times. We must have kept Capt Jefferson hopping because he seemed very pleased to have my assistance for the actual competition.

OA Memories - by Col (Ret) Quentin Thomas,

MbrNoA1803, Woodstock, GA

We were in the old community center at Vandenberg - those big leather chairs down front and that cloud of cigar smoke where the wing kings sat were a different time and philosophy. I believe they were living the Curtis LeMay legend, Cadillac car and cigars.

I especially remember LeMay walking through the booth area. He stopped to visit with Miss Little Rock (who wouldn't - she looked like Daisy Mae). However, he was also very interested in the black bear skin that we had brought down from Malmstrom. He had a number of questions from his hunter's perspective. He wanted to know the location of the kill, caliber of gun, kill shot area and the hunter. Fortunately we had the answers.

The crowds in the community center were smaller and yet the intensity was just as great. My last comp was in the old theater with 750 of our closest missile friends bringing the roof down. I recall being in the theater on the first night of score posting. The folks from Watren were the previous years winners and of course had the honor of being the last to march into the auditorium. They had really been arrogant about their

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Memories - (Continued from Page 5)

win and this had really titillated a lot of folks. They wore light yellow jackets for the competition and as they walked in a chant went up from the other wings that said, "Who Dat, Who Dat, Who Dat in that in the piss yellow jackets?" Needless to say this caught on and there were several hundred voices to join the chant in short order. So much for the competition being a levehng. Word came out immediately that the chant was not to be repeated. It wasn't. However, it and the lesson it taught was never forgotten and I believe the winners were a little more humble for the remainder of the conip.

Who could forget Lee Greenwood as he sang "Proud to be an American" and competitors wouldn't let him off the stage. I don't remember how many times they made him sing that song. I thought the roof would cave in. It was great to be part of such an exciting time.

I Did What? - Some of the errors we made in competitions

1969 - Miscomputed launch time subsequent to hold launch procedure
Failed to comply with TO two-man presence in targeting van

An RV cradle set screw was damaged

Curtain Raiser - Olympic Arena - Guardian Challenge - The Winners

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1967 - 351 SMW, Whiteman | 1969 - 321 SMW, Grand Forks | 1970 - 44 SMW, Ellsworth |
| 1971 - 351 SMW | 1972 - 381 SMW, McConnell | 1973 - 90 SMW, Warren |
| 1974 - 321 SMW | 1975 - 381 SMW | 1976 - 341 SMW, Malmstrom |
| 1977 - 351 SMW | 1978 - 91 SMW, Minot | 1979 - 390 SMW, Davis Monthan |
| 1980 - 381 SMW | 1981 - 351 SMW | 1982 - 44 SMW |
| 1983 - 381 SMW | 1984 - 90 SMW | 1985 - 308 SMW, Little Rock |
| 1986 - 341 SMW | 1987 - 321 SMW | 1988 - 91 SMW 1989-351SMW |
| 1990 and 1991 - 341 SMW | 1992 - 44 MW | 1993 - 351 MW |
- 1994 - 742 MS, Blanchard, 91MXS, Leffler, 319 CS, Randerson, 21 CS, Powers, 3 SLS, Chennault
 1995 - 10 MS, Blanchard, 6th SOS, Aldridge, 8 SWS, O'Malley, 17 SSS, Arnold, 1 SLS, Schriever
 1996 - 319 MS, Blanchard, 20 SSS, Arnold, 22 SOS, Aldridge, 7 SWS, O'Malley, 5 SLS, Schriever
 1997 - 320 MS, Blanchard, 1 SSS, Aldridge, 821 SG, O'Malley, 20 SSS, Arnold, 5 SLS, Schriever
 1998 - 341 SW, Blanchard, 21 SW, Aldridge, 45 SW, Schriever
 1999 - 341 SW, Blanchard, 50 SW, Aldridge, 30 SW, Schriever
 2000 - 91 SW, Blanchard, 21 SW, Aldridge, 45 SW Schriever
 2001 - 91 SW, Blanchard, 21SW, Aldridge, 30 SW, Schriever
 2002 - 341 SW Blanchard, 50 SW, Aldridge, 30 SW, Schriever
 2004 - 91 SW, Blanchard, 21 SW, Aldridge, 45 SW, Schriever
 2006 - 341 SW, Blanchard, 21 SW, Aldridge, 45 SW, Schriever

CS - Communications Squadron, SSS - Space Surveillance Squadron, SWS - Space Warning Squadron, SOS - Space Operations Squadron, SLS - Space Launch Squadron, SG - Space Group

How close was it? In 1969 the 321 SMW won by 1.5 points out of 4800. In 1982 and 1989, the winning margin was only 1 point out of smaller totals of 2800.

- 1982** - Reacted to invalid Emergency Action Message
Failed to commit the sortie during the first free lanuch period
Failed to connect safety lanyard to safety harness prior to raising equipment
- 1985** - Opened incorrect authenticator (then opened correct edition)
Failed to detect a scratch on the Mk 11C RV spacer door
Did not torque all top cover screws
Failed to control suspects or affect immediate apprehension
- 1987** - commanded enable when enable test was required
Failed to identify corrosion on ballistic gas generator
Required eye protection not used during task
Tech data missing change 30
- 1989** - Committed sortie with bad delay time/target
Shutdown LCC when not required
Launched sortie when not required
Identified an untensioned TE container as tensioned
Measured required readings at incorrect jacks and rejected serviceable component
Failed to recover resource once aggressor gained access
Did not complete the exercise



*Duryee and
Gordon - 1969*

The Ultimate Missile Game - *By Lt Col (Ret) Charles E. Gordon, MbrNo A1994, Centennial, CO*

Few people can look back over their life and truthfully say they were the best at doing something. For me as a missileer, it was the “missile game” played in the trainer, the environment where every missile crew had to prove their proficiency.

No one called their trainer encounters a game but a trainer ride had all the elements of a game - scoring, a rigid set of rules, win or lose outcomes, gamesmanship and officials. Game-playing success was the measure of our “right stuff” as crewmembers. As a result, every ride was an intense, pressure-packed situation because there was never a free ride - somebody was always watching and grading the performance.

From the start, I was a self-assured, almost cocky, player. But I played the same slow, methodical pace everybody else used. Speeding through a ride was inconceivable. The rules favored meticulous crews who plodded through their checklists, double-checking every action. It was the SAC way to prevent needless errors. Yet there was a vast difference in game-playing abilities among crews. Most crews could pass their check rides, but a few would occasionally stumble and fall from either nerves or some lack of knowledge. Others held more exalted positions - the ones that could be counted on to calmly and accurately cope with any trainer problem sequence or difficulty. They usually became instructors or evaluators that set the standards for how the “missile game” was being played and evaluated.

But things changed in 1967 when SAC announced plans to sponsor a yearly competitive event for its best crews. The early comp format offered something entirely new and challenging - extremely difficult scripts designed around multiple problems and a provision for task timing. Yes, comp crews would not only be scored on how accurately they completed requirements, but how fast they did them as well. SAC had created an advanced-level game designed for hotshots - one played against the clock with no holds barred. Competitors

would have to think about and dabble with speed as a playing strategy.

I could only stand on the sidelines and watch our wing’s efforts to get ready for the first comp. I was too new, still too wet behind the ears to get noticed. But it was obvious to me that our crews were struggling with the speed factor. Their dilemma was centered on the speed versus accuracy argument. The traditional approach prevailed mostly, and our crews didn’t do so well. But I’d seen the light - that it might be possible to be very speedy and accurate. All I could do was plan ahead and await my opportunity.

It came two years later after I’d upgraded to crew commander. I rolled up my sleeves and went to work. I had a strategy and a burning desire. My game plan focused on crew speed at all cost. Yes, I knew I was tampering with the purity of the traditional game by playing precariously fast, but I had to develop an operating zone just short of the breakneck level - to test the marginal limits of maximum speed versus accuracy. My crew went to the 1969 comp and showcased our risky, finely tuned playing style. And it almost worked because we came within an eyelash of winning. Yes, speed was a perilous dimension. You could easily blow a ride for the sake of a couple of seconds of double-checking.

I went back in 1970 with another crew partner and won using the same concept. We had climbed to the top of the heap because of a lot of hard work, intensive training and a unique playing style. It was an exhilarating experience because all the competitors were pushing hard on the throttle with lots of adrenaline flowing. I can still remember saying that classic Olympic Arena phrase after each problem sequence, “Action Complete,” and hearing the stopwatches click. It was the one thing that made everything different - task timing - the thing that made us attack trainer scripts like speed demons.

And almost 40 years later, I have no regrets about doing it. I exploited the Olympic Arena opportunity to achieve a personal triumph. It’s not a big legacy, but I’m proud of the new ground I broke while playing the “Ultimate Missile Game.” And I’ll put 5 of my 6 Olympic Arena scores up against anyone who ever turned launch keys in a trainer. The other score still haunts me from time to time because I occasionally ask myself, why did you make such a stupid mistake? But my soul knows the answer: You were going too damn - that’s why! Yes, a simple grease-pencil reminder would have saved the day and allowed me to win two Comps in a row. Oh well, that was the nature of the ultimate game - both the risks and rewards were always high.



44 SMW Blanchard Winners, 1970

Leadership Revealed - The 1969

Comp - by James B. Gill, BMAT 44 MMS, MbrNo A1871, Henderson, KY

I was a participant in the 1969 SAC Missile Combat Competition as a 44 MMS team member. TSgt Dale E. Paris was our team chief. We did not do very well in the competition but TSgt Paris was a great leader. He was a strong family man, worked diligently in his church, worked hard and led by example in the 44 SMW. He was well respected by officers and men alike at the "Pride Hanger". He also knew when to take you out "behind the wood shed" to explain something that you did not understand. He and his wife always welcomed us into their home for home cooked meals during the holidays and at any time for that matter. It was no wonder that his team was selected to represent the 44 SMW at Vandenberg.

At the conclusion of the ceremonies at Olympic Arena headquarters, all the winners of the Blanchard Trophy were on the stage. The room had been called to attention as the CINCSAC and the numbered Air Force commanders passed to the right and out the building. But not Lt Gen Jack J. Catton (15 AF Commander), he was up on the stage shaking their hands and congratulating every member of the 321 SMW.

"Smiling Jack" was known for that. It was not about him, but about the teams and the success of the Air Force and our country. Over a decade before that day, A1C Dale E. Paris was a crew chief aboard a B-36 piloted by Capt Jack J. Catton. I guess good leaders teach others to be good leaders. MSgt Dale Paris and team went on to win the Blanchard Trophy the next year for the 44 SMW.

I was extremely fortunate to be associated with such great men.

A Special Incentive to Win - Col (Ret)

Ron Buchert, MbrNo A1460, Tampa, FL

In the fall of 1978 as the new Deputy Commander for Operations of the 390 SMW at Davis Monthan AFB, a Titan II unit, my two immediate major tasks were to prepare our competition missile combat crews for the annual SAC Missile Competition the following spring and also get ready for our annual 3901 SMES evaluation in March. And of course in SAC there was always the possibility of the dreaded no-notice ORI.

We selected our competition crews and the training shop prepared a detailed plan to get them ready for the competition. At the same time we prepared for the SMES visit. By the first part of the year the SMES prep and the missile comp training were progressing well when all of a sudden the SAC IG team hit us with an ORI. Everything else stopped and everyone concentrated on the inspection. The "fun" had begun earlier than anticipated. But fate was on our side and the IG gave us a terrific rating and some nice words of praise.

When the IG team left we scrambled to get back on our schedule of preparing for the missile comp and the SMES. We had less than a month before the SMES was expected and little more than two months before the comp. The SMES folks arrived on time and I'm glad to say that we aced the evaluation. Back to the missile comp prep!

At this time there were still three Titan II wings and six Minuteman wings but Vandenberg no longer had the facilities to conduct the Titan II maintenance competition so one of the Titan II bases would be used. Titan maintenance events would be held before the rest of the comp and those competitors would join us at Vandenberg. There were many humorous names attached to this special Titan II maintenance competition but the one that stuck was the "Dirty Fingernails Comp" This maintenance



Gen Ellis, CINCSAC and 390 SMW team members, 1979
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Incentive to Win *(Continued from Page*

8)mpetition was fierce partly because of being “banished” to an alternate base and the feeling that we Titan guys had something to show the Minuteman guys. When the maintainers joined the rest of us at Vandenberg, we received the welcome news that the 390 SMW was on top of the Titan maintainers. Of course there was still Minuteman maintenance and the entire operations portion but we were spurred on by the success of our compatriots.

To transport the competitors to Vandenberg required nine aircraft and the plan this year called for SAC to provide eight KC-135s and TAC to provide one C-130 which was assigned to transport the closest unit to Vandenberg, the 390 SMW. The nine wings arrived at Vandenberg at approximately the same time and as we climbed out of our cramped bucket seats in TAC’s premier cargo hauler we were teased by our Minuteman buddies which made us immediately aware of what we felt was our second class citizen status. Because of this teasing we knew that we didn’t want to go home the same way but the only way to avoid this was to win and enjoy the tradition of the winner traveling in a SAC VIP KC-135 and being the first aircraft to take off. We now had a special incentive to win!

For the next three days our crews competed as they had never done before while we on the staff did our best to cheer them on. We seemed to be doing well but the competition events are sequenced so that it’s impossible to know who’s on top until the end of the entire competition. But when the final results were announced the 390 SMW had won the 1979 SAC Missile Competition for the first - and as it turned out the only - time ever! We were ecstatic! The celebration began and for our young competitors it went on the rest of the night. We received kudos from many people including our TAC host commander at Davis Monthan who offered to construct a special case in which to display the trophy, which he did!

The next day the awards were presented by CINCSAC himself and we were awarded the Blanchard, the largest trophy that I could possibly imagine. Later that day we received our “extra” reward: the honor of flying home in a VIP KC-135 and being first to take off. The flight was only about ninety minutes long but it was quite a thrill. I have no idea which wing got the “honor” of flying home in our C-130 but I must confess that I couldn’t have cared less!



Whiteman arrival, 1981

Olympic Arena 1981 - by Col (Ret) Norm Miner, MbrNo A0198, Redlands, CA

I was privileged to be involved with the missile competition on several occasions. Upon my assignment to the SAC staff (DOTM) in 1966, I participated in some of the initial planning of the first competition, “Curtain Raiser”. The basic goals of the competition were to validate and improve our technical data and procedures; to share these improvements with other units; and to enhance the “esprit de corps” of the missile community. Further opportunities came when I was assigned to the 341 SMW and later as commander of the 351 SMW. The full scope of the missile competition came into focus as wing commander.

The 1981 competition was initiated in the fall of 1980, upon receipt of the HQ SAC Plan and Operations Order. These documents outlined the rules of the competition and identified the general tasks to be performed. Additional details followed over the next several months. The immediate task was to appoint a project officer. Col Jerry Brown accepted the task with enthusiasm. Additionally, CMSgt Ken “Archie” Bunker was top choice as the senior NCO. Their professionalism and leadership set the pace for the preparations. Once these two positions were filled, the task of selecting the participating teams began. Squadron commanders, evaluators, and instructors spent numerous hours reviewing qualifications, discussing potential candidates, and finalizing a list of those who were not only highly qualified but also willing to take on the challenge. Concurrently, others were carefully reviewing the tasks to be performed, planning the training and evaluation process, and devising as many scenarios as possible to prepare the teams.

By January 1981, the teams had been formed and the training began in earnest. Each team spent hours in the trainer, on their equipment, or in the field honing their skills. Instructors and evaluators were constantly challenging them, yet providing encouragement. During this training,
(Continued on Page 10)

OA 1981 (Continued from Page 9)

some technical order deficiencies were found and TO changes submitted. In addition, the team members frequently devised more efficient procedures, and in some cases specialized tools (which were approved) to facilitate their tasks.

As preparations continued, the next challenge was to involve the other units of the wing. Each unit was briefed on several occasions as to the purpose of the competition, the tasks to be performed, and the status of the ongoing preparations. Personnel from the non-competing organizations were invited to view some of the training exercises as the teams gained proficiency. Many of these base units, including civilian employees, helped to conduct fund-raisers to defray the expenses involved. We also reached out to the surrounding community and found enthusiastic support.

By March our preparations were in full swing, but not without challenge. The competing teams were becoming weary of the repetition of their tasks. In addition, they still maintained (although slightly reduced) alert or dispatch schedules. Further, the non-competing teams found reduced trainer time and a few extra alerts or dispatched on their schedule. Also, the competition did not (and could not) interfere with the various higher headquarters inspections and evaluations which were a fact of SAC life. The skills of our squadron commanders and senior NCOs provided the balance needed to meet the various challenges.

Lt Gen Edgar Harris, Commander, 8 AF, arrived in April to lend his support and to observe several of the exercises. The Security Police exercise was held in a field near the runway. We constructed a small platform a few feet above the ground so that he could see the exercise developing. Shortly after the start, one of the team members set off an incendiary device, which immediately started a brush fire, with winds moving the flames toward the platform. I suggested to Gen Harris that we should evacuate the area. He slowly turned to me and said (jokingly, I think), "so this is your best?"



Lt Gen Harris and the Stump



The Stump and the 1981 patch

Then came May and the real test. With a rousing send-off, lead by the Missouri Secretary of State, Hon. James Kirkpatrick, our team boarded the KC-135 for the flight to Vandenberg. The welcome which we received upon landing set the tone for the remaining days. Each team was greeted by Col Ralph Spraker, commander, 3901 SMES and Competition Commander. He was at the head of a well-polished Honor Guard and surrounded by other dignitaries. The tone was Professionalism. The reception, the transportation, billeting, and all other details were handled with the careful planning that indicated to all that this really was a "big deal"!

The opening ceremonies brought all of the teams, commanders, and mascots together for the first time. This was the beginning of the test that the participants had practiced so hard for so many thankless hours. And the nerves began to quiver. Team schedules were drawn by the wing commanders from slips placed in the bowl of the Blanchard Trophy. As I announced the specific exercise schedules to our teams, their enthusiasm was strong.

Our Distinguished Civilian Guests from the Whiteman area brought even more support and enthusiasm upon their arrival at Vandenberg. In addition, a small group of NCOs, as well as several of our wives, traveled at their own expense to lend their cheers.

All available Whiteman personnel gathered at the barracks to "send off" each team as they departed for their exercise. Each team was greeted by the same group when they returned, regardless of the time. The emotions ran high and low. Team members who felt that they had made mistakes anguished. Others were highly confident. But, by the nature of the competition, hopes remained strong but nothing was certain.

Competition headquarters included the booths of each wing, adorned with posters, pictures, slogans and the much sought-after pins. Trading pins was an event of itself; a competition to see who could acquire the most – and particularly the rare ones.

(Continued on Page 11)

OA 1981 (Continued from Page 10)

The highlight of the event was the nightly score postings. Each wing arrived in their "colors", with their proud mascot leading the way. As each wing entered the theater, the 15 AF Band played strong marching pieces, the various chants rang loud and clear, and the entire missile community felt the strong bond of professionals. Little Rock took an early lead, so they were the target. As the "Razorbacks" entered the theater, their chant was "Root, Root, Root". The responding wings were quick to respond "Eat Hog, Eat Hog". The Whiteman contingent proudly paraded in with our mascot, TSgt. (now Gen (Ret)) Eucalyptus T. Stump - a wooden log decorated with pins, patches, and the appropriate rank. The cry "stump, stump, stump" rang out from our team, followed by "chop wood, chop wood" by our friendly competition. The noise and good natured ribbing helped relieve the tension of the score results to follow.

The final night score posting provided the drama. As the initial scores were posted, Little Rock fell behind and there was a glimmer of hope for the Whiteman crowd. Midway through the posting, we realized that either Ellsworth or Whiteman could come through with the win. As the final numbers were posted, Whiteman was declared the winner of the Blanchard Trophy - the first wing to win the trophy four times. The 351 SMW did not post a single individual team first place, but managed to outscore Ellsworth by a mere 2 points! Only 14 points separated the top four wings.

Following the score posting, the Whiteman group proceeded directly to the NCO club for a well-deserved celebration. Within a few minutes of arriving, I received a telephone call informing me that Lt Gen Harris was waiting for us at the Officers Club. We commandeered our bus, and off we went. Gen Harris was waiting on the front steps and greeted each of the team members with a hearty handshake and a hug. He also directed me to promote TSgt Stump to MSgt! The rest of the night was a blur.

The final banquet and closing ceremony were equally stirring and professional. As the Blanchard winner, the 351SMW was scheduled to depart Vandenberg on the first aircraft. Upon boarding, we scored another first - we had an all-female aircrew.

The return to Whiteman was marked with several celebrations, both on base and within the local community. However, within a few short weeks we were back to the real world of and ORI, followed shortly by a DNA inspection, a USAF personnel "here to help" visit, and then the 3901 SMES evaluation. That was SAC!



Winning Whiteman team in 1981

Olympic Arena, as it evolved over the years, certainly achieved the goals envisioned by the early planners. However, it also provided a means for the personnel within each wing - operations, maintenance and support - to build a bond through better understanding and cooperation. Olympic Arena also provided the venue for a number of men and women from each of the nine wings to gather at one place to compare notes, exchange "war stories", and to get that unique feeling of belonging to an elite group of professionals. The spirit and camaraderie promoted by the competition carried back to the wings with the cry "Wait until next year!"

A few years after my retirement from the Air Force, I had the opportunity to have several discussions with a Colonel of the Soviet Rocket Forces. He had just completed a tour as a Brigade Commander - the equivalent of a USAF wing commander. We discussed in general terms the training and qualifications of missile personnel, as well as morale, tours of duty and other issues related to life in a missile organization. These discussions reinforced my conviction that the personnel assigned to our missile wings (to include the support organizations) were and are the best trained, best motivated, and most professional in the world.

Times have changed. The space and missile organizations have merged into one major command. The number of missile wings has been reduced. The competition has incorporated some of these changes, but has also suffered from operational and fiscal priorities. However, I hope that some form of competition will continue, not only to sustain the original goals, but also to foster a stronger bond among the men and women of the AF Space Command.

**AAFM National Meeting 2008
Registration Form on the Back Cover
Join us in the Washington area for
our next meeting**

Curtain Raiser Vet - Lt Col (ret) John Whiteside;

MbrNo L413, San Jose, CA

Target and Alignment Team 8 was notified in mid-December 1966 that they would represent the 321 SMW in Curtain Raiser 1967. There had been no local competition to select the T&A team. Team 8 had been working together for the longest period of time, one year, and had more team experience than the local QC&E team. Members were 1st Lt John A. Whiteside, TSgt Earl E. Thoms, and A2C Larry J. O'Gwin. Following notification of selection, the team continued in the normal maintenance schedule as there were only 10 T&A teams available of 17 authorized to accomplish the heavy workload associated with Minuteman II fielding. Grand Forks was the only base with the new MM II at the time.

During the period 15 Dec 1966 - 21 March 1967 we were dispatched 23 times to 36 missile sites for maintenance. During these dispatches the team worked on refinement of methods and procedures with the competition in mind, with advice and assistance from QC&E and Maintenance Training.

At my recommendation in March, the team was removed from the maintenance schedule and began to train in the optical trainer and T-309 procedures trainer. We also got technical briefings from Technical Engineering and Analysis personnel regarding system components.

Our scheduled departure date from Grand Forks along with the other personnel was 2 April 1967. On 30 March while preparing for a dispatch we received word that the Competition Commander had requested the T&A team depart Grand Forks the next morning, 31 March, for Vandenberg as there had been problems with the competition launch facility and the officials felt we should complete our evaluation as soon as possible while the problem was under control. I do not remember what the problem was.

T&A 8 team departed Grand Forks 31 March via T-29, arriving at Vandenberg later in the day. Upon arrival at the VAFB ramp, we were given keys to a rental car for use during our TDY. What a pleasant surprise to all of us! Our evaluation was rescheduled for 2 April instead of the planned 5 April. Thus we were evaluated and finished before the event actually began!

T&A 8 didn't win. Upon return to Grand Forks, in less than 3 weeks I was notified of my transfer to Systems Command at Los Angeles AFS. I was there in time for and participated in the stand-up of SAMSO.

There were some other memorable moments at

Grand Forks: Having our T&A van stuck in deep mud at a site that was along the main highway and visible to all passing traffic. The radio chatter tipped everyone as to who was "stuck". We sure did get lots of air horns from passing AF vans. Being stranded by the "1966 blizzard of the century" at a site. Were rescued by a SnowCat after 3 days of living out of the van and survival box. Luckily we had been training another team so the sensitive material was in their possession and enroute to base by the time the snow really started. Making the top-side headset jack live, while we ran tapes with the access hatch closed. Using the intended plug caused an electronic rack to short out and fill the silo with smoke, and we were no longer issued air packs, and were closed in!! All because of an incorrect-sized shorting plug issued to us. Admiring the beauty of the Aurora Borealis many times! Being stranded in a work cage inside the silo with a training missile. Participating in the 12 October 1966 unsuccessful Long Life II planned test missile launch from an operational silo in Michigan, ND. Enroute back to base we received a radio message that our team and others were restricted to base until further notice, and that the SAC IG was airborne enroute Grand Forks! After a few hours, we were set free. Having my team put on fishermen waders to reach the alignment monuments out in the fields when the snow melted and water was several feet deep. Not volunteering to ride in a caboose with the rail cars carrying a missile back to Utah. Observing a MM I ripple launch at VAFB with Vice President Humphrey present in February 1967. We were there for a MM II launch and everyone had to evacuate the work area prior to the launches.



The Mascots, 2004

Competition (Continued from Page 12)*Winners in 2004***Competition One Liners** - a collection of short facts and happenings from the last 40 years

In 1967, Deuce crews from Grand Forks trained at Malmstrom because the Grand Forks trainers were not modified like Vandenberg's were.

In 1969, each competition team or crew had a new rental car - early every morning the dew was towed off the cars by Vandenberg airmen.

No matter how hard wings tried to publicize the annual comp, a much too common question from crews back home was "Oh, have you been TDY somewhere?"

In the earlier years, wings would transport hundreds of pounds of fresh Santa Maria strawberries back home after the comp.

One of the toughest jobs for the 3901 SMES evaluations was making Minuteman I, II and III scripts and Titan II scripts equally difficult.

Once an exercise started, crew members were not allowed bathroom breaks, but Jim Knapp's deputy, Bob Maiocco, couldn't wait - but the evaluator forgot to tell Knapp and when he asked his deputy for a checklist response and got one, he got very worried until Bob walked back in the MPT.

During Jim Burba's first year as "Voice of the Big Board", he grabbed his uniform blouse to head to the final score posting, delayed until midnight for the AF Chief of Staff, and discovered he had no brass on his uniform. It's amazing how fast one can drive in base housing when there is a real need.

Gen Curt LeMay was a guest of 15 AF commander. Gen Paul Carlton, several times in the early years of the comp - he usually came in his motor home.

The original Blanchard trophy disappeared from the trophy case at Davis Monthan and was never seen again - the current trophy is a duplicate of the original.

Over 300 AAFM members have competed in the event over the years - at least one competed as an enlisted crew member in Titan and an officer in Minuteman.

Before 1973, crews and teams got no direct feedback on the comp exercises - that year, a decision was made on the final day of competition to provide an end of comp critique for each crew/team, reviewing errors and timing results.

After using the Vandenberg recreation center for score postings and comp headquarters, a new building was built, an addition to the old 3901 SMES ops building - but the comp outgrew it quickly and the score postings were moved to the base theater, renamed Sesto auditorium.

The hole in the sheetrock in the new building was caused by an upset crew member who put his fist through the wall after his less than acceptable score was posted.

For many years, a significant number of volunteers attended from each wing, coming by car, motor home and bus, including trainers, spouses and friends.

The AAFM display was part of the 1993 comp, only four months after the association was founded.

AAFM first provided coffee cups and then coins as mementos to each competitor - the local Vandenberg AFA and AFSA chapters provided mementos before that.

At the first Guardian Challenge, many patches, scarves and other display items disappeared from the contractor expo on the second night of the event.

In 2002, when comp judge Maj Gen Jerry Perryman announced the winner of the space ops trophy, the 50 SW mascot did a back flip on stage, surprising Perryman, who fell down the steps and cut his head, resulting in two four stars rushing to his aid and holding a scarf over the cut while he finished the announcement.

The commander of the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces and some of his staff attended the comp one year.

One competitor later was a comp evaluator, commanded three wings and the major command.

*The 1982 Ops winners - with now Maj Gen Roger Burg second from the left*

A Word from the Association

AAFAM Board - this spring, we will elect four board members, with the terms for Castro, Keen, Lehnertz and Silliman ending. While all of these may be considered for reelection, we are looking for volunteers who want to serve - email or mail a short note telling why you are interested.

Future Newsletters - we always need ideas for series for our newsletters - and keep the great articles coming in. The editor's job is pretty easy since we quickly fill every issue with good articles and stories. A reminder that we publish issues in March, June, September and December, with the issues mailed the month following. Nonprofit bulk mail is slow, so remember that a March issue may not arrive until late April.

Dues - I continue to harass members about dues, since we can't keep our many programs going unless we have income to cover the costs - remember that your dues expiration date is above your name in the mailing label.

Reunions and Meetings - I recently was the speaker at the second reunion of the 308 SMW, the Titan II wing at Little Rock. During their discussions for future reunions, I offered them the opportunity to meet with us at our future National Meetings - if you are involved with a reunion project, keep in mind that it is much easier if you join us rather than do it on your own. We have been at this now for 15 years, and know how to arrange hotel rooms and meeting spaces. If you do meet on your own, we will be glad to offer advice and assistance. And please let us know early so we can help you avoid conflicts with other meetings.

Member Directory - most of you who got the hard copy of the 2007 directory figured out that we left off a lot of names - everything after Roe - the printer has mailed out an addendum for those of you who don't get the email copy - it was complete. If you got a hard copy but have email access, let me know so I can get you on the email list.

Our Email address - use aafm@afmissileers.org - a backup address is afmissileers@msn.com

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.

June Graphics - I enjoy the newsletter, but I had a problem with the June issue. I work for a CPA firm and get paid to read the IRS code and tell people what it means. But, I have tried three times to read and understand the "Missile Targeting and Alignment" and "ICBM Strike Planning" articles. I even went to my usual tactic with the Tax Code of writing down the definitions of all the acronyms so that I did not have to go back and see what they meant. I still can't understand either article. I never briefed CINCSAC when I was at Hq SAC, I did get to brief Maj Gen Sianes, the SAC/DO, several times. I know that if I had walked into his office and flipped open the viz-aid on page 7 of the newsletter he would have thrown me out before I could have opened my mouth. I appreciate that you depend on others to write many of the articles in the newsletter. They might all be well advised to remember one of the first steps Squadron Officer School taught that was essential in preparing a presentation: "Analyze your purpose and your audience." Oh, the viz-aid on page 7 of my copy of the newsletter is unreadable.
Bill Huey, MbrNo A0376, Newnan, GA

Both articles in the last issue were complex - some parts of our business were and still are - and the current rules on visual aids are a lot different than when many of us were briefing using the old black VuGraph slides. Most of us who served in the early "computer days" are often amazed and confused by the complexity of the multimedia, detailed visual aids used today - it is a different world. The graphic on page 7 is available in a larger format for those who want it.

Abbreviations - Several rank abbreviations in the newsletter don't conform to AF standards. I bring this up because all of the services have different methods of abbreviating ranks. The AF has fallen out of the correct

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aafm@afmissileers.org www.afmissileers.org

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Letters (Continued from Page 14)

way as we default to another service's style (e.g., 2LT for the Army). AFH 33-337, The Tongue and Quill, 1 Aug 04, p 312, lists the correct AF method for rank abbreviation. *Lt Col George Farfour, MbrNo L150, Colorado Springs, CO*

When we started 15 years ago, we had a Commodore 128 and a much smaller newsletter. I used the shortest abbreviation for terms - with 20 pages, we will use standard terms of ranks, units, etc.

Making It Without MM IV - condensed from an article by Adam J. Hebert in Air Force magazine

The US wants to preserve a powerful, reliable, land-based strategic nuclear deterrent force beyond the year 2020. In a shift, AFSPC has decided that this task won't require development of an all new Minuteman IV missile. The Air Force can make do by modernizing today's Minuteman III - again - and keeping them in service until 2040. AFSPC leaders recently concluded that this plan would constitute the most efficient way to maintain an effective ICBM force for the long term, but it is not without controversy. In the nuclear missile business, much has changed over the past 15 years. AFSPC now oversees a fleet much smaller than it was in Cold War days. The ICBM fleet has declined from more than 1,000 launchers in the Reagan years to 500 today. (450 by 2009 with the 564 MS closing)

The Air Force had planned to keep its current force of Minuteman IIIs in service until about 2020, after which time they were to be replaced by a mostly new design, which some dubbed Minuteman IV. However, a recent AFSPC analysis suggests it would be wiser to keep the older systems around into the 2040s through a series of incremental upgrades. This plan has been approved by the Air Force requirements council, but is not yet final. Col Paul Gydesen, chief of AFSPC's strike and deterrence division, said that there are still some interested parties who desire an all-new missile design. However, Gen Chilton, AFSPC commander, has made it clear that the incremental modernization approach is the preferred course, Gydesen said. Money was a huge factor. Over the years, Minuteman III upgrades have succeeded in attracting political support and funding. Obtaining support for a costly new-start program would have been difficult, Gydesen said, and AFSPC believes modernized Minuteman IIIs will meet all mission requirements. In addition to the propulsion, guidance, and warhead programs currently in progress, several other improvements will be needed to keep the Minuteman III viable beyond 2020, when capabilities will begin to "ef-

face," in the words of missile officials. The long-term incremental upgrades will begin around 2020 with introduction of new guidance components, said Gydesen. The ongoing Minuteman III Guidance Replacement Program is improving maintainability and reliability, but does not offer accuracy improvements. Therefore, "Increment I" of the modernization process would provide that accuracy boost and is expected to dramatically improve the guidance system's mean time between failure. Guidance enhancements would be followed by security and command-control-communications-computer improvements.

Finally, USAF would undertake booster and re-entry vehicle upgrades, "ultimately leading to full operational capability of the completed follow-on capability in the late 2020s," Gydesen said. This, he said, would ensure an effective land-based nuclear deterrent "well into the 2040s and likely beyond." It was thought for a time that the Minuteman III follow-on would be called Minuteman IV, but "this naming convention was discontinued as the incremental approach evolved," Gydesen said, adding that "we were not sure when the system [would] have changed enough" to justify renaming. "We have not spent any time at this point thinking about when, or if, Minuteman III deserves a new name."

Taps for Missileers

Lt Col (Ret) Richard Bean, served in Titan II in the 381 SMW and 308 SMW, at Hq SAC, and GLCM at Hq USAFE and the 501 TMW, and lived in Baton Rouge, LA

Lt Col William (Ret) Billar, an AAFM member, served in Atlas in the 556 SMS and lived in Daytona Beach, FL

SMSgt (Ret) John Brodison, served in Atlas in the 556 SMS, in Titan II in the 390 SMW, 381 SMW and the 3901 SMES and lived in Scottsdale, AZ

Lt Col (Ret) Robert Buzan, an AAFM member, lived in Little Rock, AR.

Gen (Ret) Russel E. Dougherty, former CINCSAC.

Col (Ret) Lloyd Houchin, an AAFM member, served in Minuteman in the 351 SMW, Hq SAC and lived in Lebanon, IL

Jeffrey Mazza, an AAFM member, served in Minuteman in the 44 SMW and lived in Joliet, IL

Lt Col (Ret) Wayne Penley, served in Atlas in the 579 SMS and Minuteman in the 90 SMW, and at Patrick, and lived in Melbourne, FL.

Lt Col (Ret) David Sevel, served in Minuteman and lived in Ucaipa, CA

Capt (Ret) Larry Tice, an AAFM member, served in Atlas in the 548 SMS and 576 SMS and Titan II in the 390 SMW and lived in Pitman, PA

North Dakota Missile Site - by Merl

Paaverud, Director-State Historical Society of North Dakota

The State Historical Society of North Dakota has been working with the Air Force to save and maintain sites from the former 321 SMW/MG. This has been a long process, but we have saved one LCC of the 15 and the topside of one Minuteman LF of the original 150 that were part of the wing. We are hoping to acquire the two sites and include them in our state historic sites collection.

Our deadline for this is December 2007. We have requested GSA to begin the paperwork for transfer of the sites and the State Historical Board will be asked to give their final approval for accepting the sites during their October quarterly meeting. The staff of the Society is working to put together information to support this transfer. We have visited the Minuteman National Historic Site in South Dakota and have collected a great deal of information that will help us in the process. We had hoped to raise one million dollars, and have been successful in raising about half of that. This funding will be used to refurbish the sites and we will continue to seek the remainder of funding that will enable us to open and operate the sites in the future.

We are excited to tell the story of the 321 SMW/MG, the Minuteman missile system, the Cold War and the missileers who served here. We hope we will have the opportunity to move forward with our plans to educate people about this important part of world history.

50 Years of Atlas - by Richard Martin, San Diego, CA

A celebration of 50 years of Atlas rocket vehicle flight was held in San Diego in July. Over 800 Atlas people attended events that included a golf tournament; cocktail party; tour of the Centaur tank manufacturing facility; a reunion with videos of important first flights, a slideshow, posters, hardware displays and dinner at the San Diego Air and Space Museum with speeches by Mercury astronaut Scott Carpenter and Michael Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force. All were proud of their part in the design, manufacture, and launch of 592 vehicles and 100% success of all Atlas II, IIA, IIAS, IIIA, IIIB, and V versions over the last 85 flights.

A committee of Atlas veterans would like to honor recently deceased Wally Schirra with a full-scale Atlas D with a Mercury capsule at the San Diego Air and Space Museum. If anyone knows of an available Atlas D, please contact Dick Martin at remartin7@cox.net incc 1951.

Join us in DC - 2008

You will find the registration form for our next National Meeting on the back cover of this issue of the newsletter. Make plans now to join other missileers for our eighth meeting at the Hyatt Dulles on the outskirts of Washington, DC. We have a great hotel with a superb rate - \$89 per room including a buffet breakfast for two each morning. We will begin the meeting on Thursday, 9 October and end on Monday, 13 October, a small change in schedule to get better rates in a busy area.

As usual, we will have a very busy four days. We begin Thursday afternoon with registration and the usual welcome party that evening. On Friday morning, we will take buses to the new Air Force Memorial, hopefully to the Pentagon for a tour, to the World War II Memorial and complete the tour day at the Smithsonian's Udvar Hazy Museum near the hotel at Dulles. Friday night we will have an Italian buffet at the hotel. Saturday morning will be filled with our general membership meeting and the board meeting, with an optional tour that afternoon to Mt Vernon. The AAFM Banquet will be that evening, with a featured speaker. Sunday, we will take a tour of the Gettysburg battlefield in Pennsylvania, with a buffet dinner at the hotel that evening.

One of the limitations of all the hotels we considered for 2008 was the size of the ballroom - 350 seems to be a "max" number for the area. For that reason, you need to get your reservations in early for the event - we had 350 attendees in 2006 at Cheyenne - so we should fill all the seats quickly for 2008.

Reunions

SAC 2008 - 30 April - 4 May 2008, Dayton, OH, reunion and dedication of the SAC Memorial, contact J. T. Rovero, 520-203-8809 or 866-260-9302, jtrome25@excite.com,

SAC Airborne Command Control Association, 15-19 October 2008, Dayton, OH, contact Wilton Curtis, 804-740-2290, wcurtis135@aol.com

455SMW (Minot), 10-14 September 2008, Northeast Harbor, ME, Contact Jack Twigg at JKTwigg@worldramp.net

579 SMS, 15-18 May 2008, Roswell, NM, contact Fred Mortimer, Fmortimer@tampabay.rr.com, 727-734-3487, www.579sms.com

Association of Air Force Missileers - 2008 National Meeting, 9-13 Oct 2008, Hyatt Dulles, Herndon, VA.

Reunion Notices should be to AAFM as early as possible for the newsletter, web page and e-mail updates.