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AIR FORCE MISSILEERS

The Newsletter of the Association
of Air Force Missileers



**Air Force Missileers Hall of Fame
Inaugural Class**

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NATIONAL MEETING
BUELLTON, CA
OCTOBER 23-27, 2024**



SCAN ME



**Volume 32, Number 2
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In February, many of you participated in the every two-year vote to fill vacancies on our Board of Directors. CMSgts (ret) Shane Finders and John Baker were reelected to another six-year term and two retiring board members CMSgt (ret) Bob Kelchner and Gen (ret) Lance Lord were replaced by Maj Gen (ret) Fred Stoss and Col (ret) Richard Hutchins. Chief Kelchner is a founding member of the Association with a Life membership number of 14! He has served on the board since 1998 and played a key role in printing our newsletter. Gen Lord is also a life member serving on the Board from 1993-2004 and then as our 4th President from 2007 to today. We appreciate their long and dedicated service.

As we start the new board year on May 1st, we welcome CMSgt (ret) Mark Silliman as the 5th President of AAFM. I have known Mark for more than 30 years and am excited for the energy that he is already putting into the Association. Mark and I have discussed some ideas on his way ahead so stay tuned. In fact, check out his President's corner, a new effort starting with this newsletter.

Air Force Missileer Hall of Fame:

As you noticed on our front cover, this month's newsletter is dedicated to the Inaugural class of the Air Force Missileers Hall of Fame. Our selection committee, led by Linda Aldrich, nominated 18 individuals and a musical group to be part of the Inaugural class. The class covers a wide variety of people that go back to the initial development and deployment of Air Force ICBM systems. We will honor each and every one of these outstanding missileers at the Hall of Fame banquet on Saturday, October 26, 2024 as part of the AAFM National Meeting. A special thanks to Col (ret) Charles Snyder and Capt Jeff Bair for providing design concepts and to Lt Col (ret) Marland Chow for the final design featured on the cover.

Cancer update:

This month we share the Torchlight Initiative's public response to the USAFSAM cancer study. The Torchlight Initiative continues to provide valuable data to the USAFSAM study team and act as an independent watchdog of the study results. AAFM will continue to advocate not only to ensure that our current alert force operates in a safe environment but that the Air Force accurately documents the elements and conditions that operators and maintainers were exposed to over the previous 60 years. There are plenty of first-hand stories of exposure that need to be documented by the study to ensure proper VA attention and proper care to our missile veterans.

Attention Blast Door Artists and Patch Designers:

Did you design this patch or know who did? Did you paint artwork on the blast door or in the tunnel junction or know who did? As part of our upcoming book on Minuteman art, AAFM is seeking the unknown artists of 150 or more morale patches and the many artists who painted blast doors and TJ walls. If you have designed a morale patch over the last 40 years, we want to make sure we credit your work. You can find more on each patch in our gallery at: <https://gallery.afmissileers.org>. If you know the LCC artists, please send an email to Director@AFMissileers.org soon so we can include your name in the book.



AAFM National Meeting 2024 – Buellton, CA

Have you registered for the AAFM National Meeting in October? In addition to the Hall of Fame Banquet and a day with Missileers at Vandenberg SFB, we have invited several outstanding guest speakers. Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Dave Flosi has been invited to speak on Thursday. 20 AF/CC, Major General Stacy Jo Huser has agreed to join us on Friday night and the USAFSAM cancer study team will join us at the Saturday general membership meeting along with Col Danny Sebeck, cancer survivor and founder of the Torchlight Initiative. The AFGSC/CC, General Tom Bussiere, has been invited to speak at the Hall of Fame banquet. We have a block of rooms at the Santa Ynez Valley Marriott available.

If you have any questions or comments, please reach out as I'm here to serve. You can always reach me at Director@AFMissileers.org or on my cell at 719-351-3962. Please remember I live in Florida and operate on Eastern Time!

Jim Warner, AAFM Executive Director

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Air Force Missileers Hall of Fame Inaugural Class

Linda Aldrich, AAFM Board of Directors

The Association of Air Force Missileers has been celebrating our heritage and advocating for Missileers since 1993. In 2018, the Board of Directors voted to establish an Air Force Missileers Hall of Fame (AFMHOF) to identify individuals who have significantly contributed to Air Force missile heritage. The Missileers Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions towards the development, acquisition, operations, maintenance, security and/or support of the nation's missile fleet from the early Matadors and Mace to today's ICBM fleet. Inductees into the AFMHOF, or their families if the award is posthumous, will receive a personal certificate and an AFMHOF coin.

The Hall of Fame Honorees will be featured in an electronic display at key locations beginning with the SAC Museum in Omaha, Nebraska and the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. Additional locations to be added over time. The AFMHOF display will consist of a photo of the member and a summary of accomplishments that warranted the selection. AFMHOF inductees will be announced biennially and then recognized at the biennial AAFM National Meeting, with each successive class being added to the electronic displays.

Congratulations to our inaugural class of the Air Force Missileers Hall of Fame. These are amazing individuals who have contributed so much to our career field and our heritage.

Chief Master Sergeant Joseph D. Andrew, Jr.

Chief Andrew advocated for ICBMs, modernization of the nuclear enterprise and camaraderie of missileers throughout active duty and in retirement.

After serving on a Matador missile launch team, at Osan AB, Korea, he became a Minuteman Missile Maintenance Team member and helped bring the first Minuteman missiles in the AF to alert status during the Cuban Missile Crisis. After 3901st SMES evaluator duties and multiple NCOIC positions, Andrew developed the initial



personnel plan at SAC HQ for the first Peacekeeper missile unit. His painting "The Guardians" was presented at the Minuteman National Historic Site Visitor Center dedication in Philip, South Dakota, and his painting, "A Legacy of Deterrence" is currently on display in Headquarters Air Force Global Strike Command at Barksdale AFB, Louisiana.

Colonel Charles E. "Chuck" Blackburn

Colonel Blackburn's service took him to several Air Force bases, with his last being F.E. Warren AFB in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Colonel Blackburn was a pioneer in intercontinental ballistic missile maintenance and helped refine maintenance practices for the Atlas, Titan, Minuteman and Peacekeeper weapon systems. The Blackburn Trophy presented at Global Strike Challenges in recognition for Best Missile Maintenance Team is named in honor of Colonel Blackburn. After his 33-year Air Force career ended in 1988, Blackburn was employed with the City of Cheyenne and served as president of the Wyoming Chapter, Military Officers Association of America. Colonel Blackburn died on August 27, 2018.



Chief Master Sergeant Kenneth W. "Archie" Bunker

Chief Bunker maintained missile systems throughout the world, including the new Mace in Germany and Okinawa, the Ground Launched Cruise Missile in Sicily and the Minuteman in the United States. With a hands-on management style and strong leadership, Bunker was motivational and very connected to his airmen in the Missile Maintenance Team, 351st Organizational Missile Maintenance Squadron, Whiteman AFB, Missouri.



His years of experience led to his selection as a SAC Minuteman evaluator with the 3901st SMES, Vandenberg AFB, California. He retired with nearly 30 years of career excellence in missile maintenance.

Master Sergeant Dayna L. Castro

As one of the first female ICBM maintainers at Whiteman AFB, Missouri, MSgt Castro blazed the trail for Air Force service women. She was known as a team player, carrying her weight lugging tool boxes, work cages and being a part of all maintenance activities. At Vandenberg AFB, California, she was assigned to the Destruct Ordnance Section, 394th ICBM Test Maintenance Squadron and to Quality Control at ISTRAD. After performing duties on the 30th Space Wing Command Staff, she moved to the Protocol Office, a job she absolutely loved. She was the noted expert in high-visibility events and was the heart and soul of the annual missile competition until retirement with 20 years of active-duty service. MSgt Castro died on February 17, 2023.



Colonel John E. Chambers

After serving as an Atlas F Missile Combat Crew Member at Altus AFB, Oklahoma and at SAC HQ in the Atlas F Operational Flight Test Program, Colonel Chambers became a Minuteman missile requirements officer and subsequently the Minuteman III Project Officer from design to first flight testing. He was a Titan II Squadron Commander at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, a Titan II Wing Deputy Commander for Operations, followed by Vice Wing Commander and then Wing Commander. As the final Commander of the 390 SMW, he cased the



unit colors for the first Titan II wing to be deactivated. Chambers was then the Titan II Wing Commander at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas during deactivation. His dream of a Titan II Museum was realized in 1994 with the dedication of the Titan II Museum as a historic site in Green Valley, Arizona.

Major General Thomas F. Deppe

For 39 of his 42 years in the Air Force, General Deppe's assignments were directly related to missiles, from enlisted time in the Hound Dog, Quail and Short Range Attack Missile programs to Commander, 20th Air Force. He is a master missileer in both operations and maintenance. Prior to retirement, General Deppe was Vice Commander, AF Space Command, Peterson AFB, Colorado, responsible for the development, acquisition and operation of AF space and missile systems, overseeing a global network of satellite command and control, communications, missile warning and launch facilities, and ensuring the combat readiness of America's ICBM force. In 2007, General Deppe was inducted into the Enlisted Heritage Hall Wall of Achievers at the AF Enlisted Heritage Research Institute, Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Alabama.



Chief Master Sergeant Patricia Dupuis

Her illustrious career is a legacy to enlisted women maintainers and all military women, her dedication ensuring the door was open for others to follow. At her first assignment at Whiteman AFB, Missouri, she was one of the first female missile maintenance technicians. She was dispatched to the field as the "cage man" on a Missile Maintenance Team (MMT), where she excelled at being "hands on" with the missile. She was the first female MMT



training instructor and the first female member of an Olympic Arena competition team, where her team set a new Olympic Arena record. Among many firsts, she held several leadership positions to include: NCOIC of MMT; Superintendent, Job Control Branch; NCOIC, Team Training Flight; Superintendent, Aerospace Ground Equipment Flight; and Superintendent, Training Flight.

Brigadier General Gerald G. Fall, Jr.

General Fall began his career as an Army private during WWII. His variety of assignments in the strategic missile field, from its earliest days to evolution into a powerful force, make General Fall one of the few Air Force officers who possessed such depth of experience in both strategic bomber and missile weapon systems. Fall capped a 32-year career as Commander of the 4th Strategic Missile Division, with more than 26,000 personnel in Minuteman and bombardment wings at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota; F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming;



Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota; and Whiteman AFB, Missouri. With his wide experience in all SAC missile systems, he commanded the 321 SMW at Grand Forks, North Dakota and the 341 SMW at Malmstrom AFB, Montana. Brig Gen Fall died on August 8, 2011.

Colonel Gilbert F. Friederichs

In his 26-year career in the Air Force, Colonel Friederichs was on the ground floor of SAC's ICBM program. He was a base commander for nearly eight years in California, Guam and Wyoming. At F.E. Warren, he oversaw the construction and activation of the Atlas ICBM facilities, leading to Initial Operational Capability (IOC). In 1960, Friederichs became the first SAC non-rated Wing Commander, assuming command of the first railborne Minuteman system,



Hill AFB, Utah. As Vice Wing Commander, Malmstrom AFB, Montana, he oversaw activation of the first hardened Minuteman wing. He was the first commander of the 321 SMW, the nation's first Minuteman II wing. He oversaw its activation, IOC and attainment of full operational capability. Col Friederichs died on November 20, 1996.

Colonel Edgar Allan Gill

When Colonel Gill reported to Osan AB, Korea, he instantly became an 18XX Missile Launch Officer assigned to the command post, pulling shifts maintaining alert status for six Matador missiles. When the Minuteman Test Launch Program was in start-up mode, he was selected as one of two MCCCs to launch the first Minuteman to lift off from Vandenberg AFB, California and was the first SAC-trained MCCC for the 3901st SMES,



instrumental in bringing on board the standardization sections and stand board crews at Wings II, III, IV and V. In 1977, Colonel Gill became the Base Commander of Malmstrom AFB, Montana and as Commander, 341st Combat Support Group, the wing won multiple awards for excellence.

Lieutenant General Harry E. Goldsworthy

With the Army Air Corps, General Goldsworthy flew submarine patrols and B-25 strafers in WWII. After serving as a refueling wing Vice Wing Commander, he transferred to the Ballistic Missiles Center as Site Activation Task Force Commander for the first Minuteman ICBM wing at Malmstrom AFB, Montana. In 1962, launch facility Alpha-06 and three other sites went on "strategic alert" after learning the USSR had placed nuclear missiles in Cuba. Alpha-06 was coined the "Ace in the



Hole,” per President John F. Kennedy’s comment regarding the role of our strategic nuclear defenses during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Over the next four days, the wing placed five more missiles on alert--all under Goldsworthy’s direct supervision as Task Force Commander. Lt Gen Goldsworthy died on February 16, 2022.

The Groobers

The Groobers became a quartet in 1975 at F.E. Warren AFB. Wyoming and this irreverent group of missile crew members told stories of crew life through music. The Groobers’ first song was “Little Boxes”—a local hit. Popular demand quickly forced an expansion of their missile-duty-focused repertoire. What began as private entertainment at



local functions grew into a significant entertainment contribution throughout the SAC missile bases. General Russel E. Dougherty, CINCSAC, said, “The songs are symbolic of the SAC missile force’s coming of age. When missileers are able to make fun of

themselves, it’s a sign that the missile force has come of age.” The band members included: Rolland R. “Rollie” Stoneman, George L. “Butch” Theisen II, Wallace S. “Wally” Odd II and Malcolm L. McCown (Deceased).

Chief Master Sergeant Henry “Hank” Habenick

Chief Habenick served his entire career as an ICBM maintenance technician before retiring after 24

years in the Air Force. After serving in several leadership positions at the operational wing and numbered Air Force, Chief Habenick was assigned to the 3901st SMES where he drove significant changes to evaluation procedures that encompassed over-the-shoulder evaluations of the Wing evaluators. SAC recognized Habenick’s contributions by awarding him with SAC Maintainer of



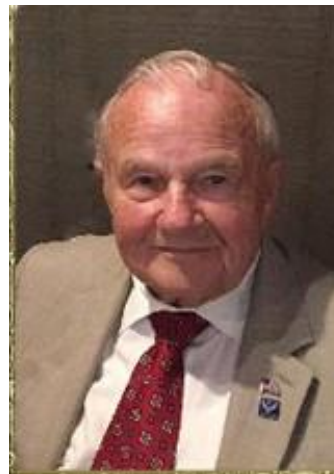
the Year. After retirement, he was still “hands on” in the development of significant improvements and progress in the ICBM force through the Ballistic Missile Office. CMSgt Habenick died on July 29, 2022.

Chief Master Sergeant Benjamin W. Hines

Chief Hines’ 31-year Air Force career began with aircraft mechanic training before entering the world of ICBMs as a missile maintenance technician. Hines was a maintenance Team Chief at F.E.

Warren AFB, Wyoming

where he was a trainer, evaluator and NCOIC for the SAC missile competition. After duty as a SAC IG team member for the 3901st SMES, Vandenberg AFB, California, he became the Missile Maintenance Supervisor for the 351st Strategic Missile Wing, Whiteman AFB, Missouri, which led directly to his appointment as the



Senior Enlisted Advisor for the wing. After retirement in 1983, Hines began a second career as a public servant for the state of North Carolina. CMSgt Hines died on November 24, 2020.

Lieutenant General Arlen Dirk Jameson

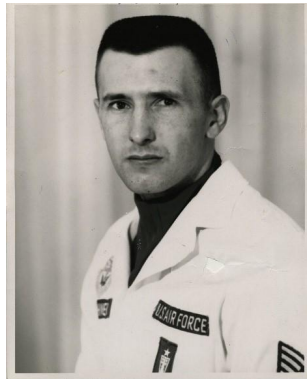
Lt Gen Jameson was a servant leader in every sense of the term, leading with passion, conviction, courage and empathy. He earned the affectionate nickname “The Coach” from his troops as a sign of their respect and devotion to his vision, and ideals of service before self, integrity and unwavering commitment to his beloved country and the Constitution. Quickly volunteering after the Cuban



Missile Crisis for SAC's nascent ICBM program, Jameson certified as one of the earliest Minuteman ICBM launch crew members, and made missile operations the focus of the majority of his military career. He rose rapidly through the ranks, serving in squadron, group, wing, air division and numbered Air Force command positions. Lt Gen Jameson died on April 15, 2021.

Chief Master Sergeant Robert H. "Bob" Kelchner

Chief Kelchner spent 20 of his 25 years of service to the Air Force contributing to the excellence of the ICBM weapon systems and defense of the United States. He was the Targeting and Alignment Instructor for the first operational crews from Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota, and he participated in bringing the first Minuteman launch facility at Vandenberg AFB, California to strategic alert during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. He assisted in posturing the first Minuteman wing to operational status at Malmstrom AFB, Montana, preparing 15 launch sites. His career included duties as: 3901st SMES evaluator; Targeting Section NCOIC, NCOIC of Team Training Branch, Job Control and Quality Control, and Maintenance Superintendent.



Chief Master Sergeant Michael Kenderes

Through his many years of service, Chief Kenderes led, trained, and influenced scores of airmen, non-commissioned officers, and commissioned officers in the missile community, devoting his entire working life to the readiness of the ICBM. As an airman, he helped develop the multi-million dollar Titan II trainers used to train all SAC operations personnel. During the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962,



Airman First Class Kenderes maintained the alert status of nine Titan I ICBMs for the duration of the crisis, staying in the missile field for 15 days with no relief. As a TSgt, he correctly aligned five Minuteman I ICBMs for test launches at Vandenberg AFB, California. Throughout his career he identified dozens of technical improvements to the numerous weapon systems he maintained and developed, which encompassed Titan I, Titan II, Minuteman I/II and Minuteman II/III.

Sergeant David L. Livingston

The moment of heroism for Sergeant Livingston happened at 3:00 a.m. on September 19, 1980. The scene was the Titan II Missile Complex 374-7 in rural Arkansas where the missile was gushing rocket fuel eight stories below. Solutions were in short supply and someone had to go into the complex and turn on an exhaust fan. Senior Airman David "Livy" Livingston tapped himself on the chest as if to say, "I'll go." At 3:00 a.m. Livingston had just emerged from the complex where air samples showed high fuel vapor levels. Livingston reentered the complex to switch on the fan, and was almost back out again when a fire-orange plume erupted from the silo and the sky rained fire and concrete and glowing steel. Livingston lay on the ground for an hour, breathing in toxic vapors that hung in the air. At 6:00 p.m., the 22-year-old kid who wore a straight cap and crooked smile was gone. Sergeant Livingston's courage and bravery undertaking a dangerous task under difficult conditions demonstrated unparalleled heroism to his comrades and our country.



Major General Thomas H. Neary

Throughout 28 years as a missileer, General Neary distinguished himself as a patriot, man of God and family, leader and mentor, impacting the lives of thousands of airmen, civilians and their families. After five years of missile operations duty at Malmstrom AFB, Montana as



Missile Combat Crew Commander, Wing Senior Standardization Crew Commander and Wing Plans Officer, he began a varied staff career in nuclear planning and missile force development. Neary commanded two ICBM wings with three different missile configurations. As Commander, Twentieth Air Force, and Task Force 214, USSTRATCOM, F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming, Neary was responsible for the nation's ICBM force, including three operational wings with more than 9,500 people. Maj Gen Neary died on February 22, 2017.

AAFM Board of Directors Leadership Changes

CMSgt (ret) Mark Silliman, AAFM Board President

I would like to sincerely thank two outstanding missileers. My thanks to General Lance Lord for his leadership and direction while serving as President of the Association's Board of Directors. He always kept the board moving in the right direction while balancing engagements with Air Force leadership at the highest levels and retirement with family. The association is a much-improved organization because of General (ret) Lord's tireless efforts. My thanks also to Chief Master Sergeant (ret) Bob Kelchner, who voluntarily stepped down from the board to allow new blood to take over his committee lead position. Bob has greatly impacted AAFM in almost every area of its existence and each input he made was value added to the organization. AAFM will continue to benefit from these two great leaders as they move to emeritus status with the Board of Directors!

I am standing on the shoulders of AAFM's past Presidents and leaders and am humbled when I think of their contributions to promoting the heritage of the missileer community and the weapon systems under their watch. My efforts will be focused to support Jim Warner, our outstanding Executive Director, our talented board, the IT team, producers of the newsletter and most important, our faithful members and those airmen who 24/7/365 operate, maintain, secure and support this nation's most critical national assets. **Missileers:** Extraordinary People, Unmatched Responsibility, Overwhelming Capability!

I've made reservations for the AAFM National Meeting, October 23-27, 2024, at the Buellton Marriott and I'm looking forward to seeing you and together honoring the initial class of AF Missileer Hall of Fame Inductees and their families at our banquet that Saturday Night. I encourage you

to log into the AAFM Website and register for our National Meeting. Additionally, I just attended the 80th Anniversary Celebration Dinner for 20th Air Force hosted by Major General Stacy Jo Huser and listened to five Airmen in 20th AF tell their story in a way that was touching and meaningful. In the near term, I'm attending a 321st Strategic Missile Wing (SMW) Reunion in June, a tentative visit to the 91st Missile Wing in August, and a pending speaking opportunity at the National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, Ohio. There is room in the schedule for more...bring it on! I'll keep you posted on my activities to promote this organization in the monthly dispatches.

Increasing membership will be my priority. We need to personally deliver the message that AAFM offers a great social media platform and an avenue to many things: missileer information on Sentinel, real-time blog on missile topics, cancer study updates, reach back to missileer friends, an informative newsletter, monthly dispatches, scholarship opportunities, museum grant programs, an online AAFM patch gallery and accoutrement store and access to the vast resource of archives on missileer and weapon system information from Matador to Minuteman. I will spend much more time as an AAFM member benefitting from this association than it took me to be eligible to join. That is the case for almost all military/veteran organizations. We have a lifetime ahead to share our missileer stories with our friends and those now in the arena who listen to our story through AAFM avenues.

I'm not ready to just sit back and be the Board President...instead I'm ready to engage and hear from YOU on how, we ALL can continue to move this great organization forward and fulfill its mission: Preserving our Heritage. The primary goal of AAFM is to preserve the history of USAF missile systems and the people who develop, test, deploy, operate, maintain and support them.

I have my work package, truck loaded, safety briefed, picked up my keys, codes and defenders and this team is cleared to depart by TCC and Job Control or in today's terms...the MOC or maybe the Integrated Command Center (ICC) as in Sentinel!

Torchlight Initiative

Jim Warner, AAFM Executive Director

The U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine (USAFSAM) published a press release on March 13, 2024 regarding their recent town hall from February. The Torchlight Initiative has sought to provide feedback and Registry data to USAFSAM regarding their ongoing study from day one. Our organization continues to have many concerns about this study and the way it is proceeding. This statement addresses some of these concerns:

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were found in many Missile Alert Facilities (MAFs), in direct contrast to earlier Air Force statements that PCBs were no longer in the facilities. Their statements also highlight the lack of scientifically based cleanup procedures in the past.

As confirmed by USAFSAM, their current conclusions represent an “incomplete capture of cancer data” and only contains TRICARE medical records in electronic form from 2001-2020. They did not include paper records that require manual entry. USAFSAM has not incorporated data from the Department of Defense (DoD) Cancer Registry, the Veterans Affairs (VA) Cancer Registry, the National Death Index, and other pooled registries that pull data from across individual State cancer registries. For example, their current data would not capture someone who separated from the Air Force and sought civilian medical care. Additionally, the VA has denied medical coverage for many of our members, so their records may never be included in the USAFSAM study. Torchlight’s self-reported Registry data, which is more comprehensive and inclusive of current diagnoses, shows different conclusions than USAFSAM. We have shared our data with USAFSAM, but it doesn’t appear they included it in their study.

USAFSAM acknowledges their epidemiological study is incomplete. Given USAFSAM’s incomplete data and analysis, their public statements about disease prevalence are premature. Some servicemembers and their families may view their statements to be disrespectful. Please review their memo titled Missile Community Cancer Study (MCCS) Epidemiology Study Brief Report (Phase 1A) 6 March 2024 in its entirety before making conclusions about their inconclusive findings.

USAFSAM acknowledges an increased number of breast and prostate cancers among the missile community, but undermine this conclusion

by suggesting increased detection capabilities in the DoD and VA might be the cause. To be clear, the cause could also be toxic exposures during missile service. That the data mirrors the veteran community at-large, is potentially a reflection of the DoD historically complying with EPA standards at lower rates than their civilian counterparts.

USAFSAM published soil, air, and water sampling conducted at the MAFs. These studies only demonstrate the quality of the conditions today, not the conditions under which most of our members served. For example, we have learned through our research that reverse osmosis systems were installed in the MAFs sometime in the past decade. Water sampling in USAFSAM’s study was conducted from faucets in the MAFs, which would have gone through significant filtration prior to testing. USAFSAM, to our knowledge, has not reviewed historical water sampling of the ground water used by the MAFs. Past bioenvironmental reporting by the Air Force, however, revealed concerns over water contamination by pesticides and other toxins.

The Torchlight Initiative requested access to historical water testing data. We were preliminarily denied these records.

USAFSAM surveyed over 80,000 records of those who served across the missile enterprise. The data does not account for the fact that different career fields served in different facilities, with varying exposures based on the type of facility (ex: MAFs vs. Launch Control Centers (LCCs) vs. Launch Facilities (LFs)). Those serving in LCCs may have been exposed to PCBs at higher rates than those serving in MAFs. Those serving in missile maintenance would have been exposed to other toxic compounds used to maintain the weapon systems at higher rates than those in the LCCs.

USAFSAM is working to standardize the records documentation process that uses a service member’s Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER). Our members continue to report their ILERs do not contain any such documentation.

We will continue to engage with USAFSAM to bring our concerns to light. We will also continue conducting our own research and requesting records that help paint a complete picture.



Enlisted Women Missile Maintenance Technicians

Jim Warner, AAFM Executive Director

Directors Note: The following document was written by SMSgt Debra G. Shaffer when assigned to Headquarters Air Force Space Command, Directorate of Logistics, Missile Maintenance Division in September 1997 as a "Bullet Background Paper" for the AFSPC leadership. The document content has not been changed; however, it has been retyped, since a compatible word version could not be sourced. Unsuccessful attempts were made to contact Debra Shaffer for comment and we (AAFM) look forward to hearing from her and will include in future newsletters any more recent writings by anyone on the topic of enlisted women missile maintenance technicians.

Most of us are aware of how little has been written about the contributions of the enlisted force to the overall success of our Air Force. Unfortunately, even less has been documented concerning the contributions made by enlisted women. Although numerous women in several varied career fields made a great impact on our Air Force, this paper focuses on enlisted women in one of the more non-traditional career fields; Minuteman missile maintenance. It will cover the evolution of an all-male career field into one which embraces qualified technicians, regardless of gender. It will then serve to document the outstanding careers and contributions of three women who've dedicated their lives to maintaining our nation's deterrent missile force.

The Minuteman maintenance career field, due to its technical nature, was planned for men from its inception. The February 1962 unit history of Malmstrom AFB, Montana, highlights the biggest job facing the wing at the time was "assuring that the men are trained." It goes on to say the maintainers who didn't have previous experience in maintenance were engineering graduates and highly trained airmen, and "the maintenance of these missiles will fall on the shoulders of these men..." It also states "upon completion of training, these men will be among the most highly skilled people in their highly technical profession. They will be the experts who maintain the nation's first line of defense." Consequently, when the first Minuteman I intercontinental ballistic missile, according to unit history, arrived by rail car at Malmstrom AFB at 1800 on Monday, Jul 23, 1962, there were no women standing by. This first

missile was offloaded by a team of enlisted men, transported to the Missile Handling Area by enlisted men, and installed into a nearby launch facility by enlisted men. The idea of women in missile maintenance wasn't even a twinkle in anyone's eye and was certainly well into the future.

One of the first steps toward integration of women into the career field came about in July 1971. According to the USAFMPC letter dated July 26, 1971, Strategic Air Command (SAC) was one of several Major Commands (MAJCOM) to agree to "the dispersal of WAF without quantitative or special stipulations." Though yet several steps away from opening the missile maintenance career field to women, this action sent a clear message from SAC that women were welcome at their bases!

Probably the most important event to increase opportunities for women in the Air Force took place in March 1972 when a congressional hearing was held on the Utilization of Womenpower. The report of this hearing indicates Mr. George A. Daoust, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, stated that the Department of Defense (DOD) was conducting a comprehensive study with the hope that increased use of military women would assist in the goal of an all-volunteer force. The ball was rolling, and in the fall of 1972, the DPW Newsletter reported over 100 career ladders previously closed to women were open effective January 1973. Shortly after the news article, the CSAF Office sent a message to all MAJCOMs stating: "This climaxed an extensive Air Staff study...to determine the desirability and feasibility of accessing greater numbers of women for duty in a wide range of military occupational specialties in keeping with the traditionally progressive management of women in the Air Force, the changing atmosphere of a zero draft environment, and the need to continue personnel programs in consonance with national equal opportunity objectives. The increased representation of women was evaluated considering not only equal opportunity, but also the valuable resource they represent in the volunteer force we seek to attain. In the future, you will receive more women in a larger range of jobs than before. I ask you to lend your full support in ensuring a smooth transition. Your efforts are key to...the achievement of an all-volunteer force." One of these newly opened career fields was 443X0G, Missile Maintenance Technician.

Even though the field was now open, according to the Historical Summary of the Directorate, Women in the Air Force, at the end of

fiscal year (FY) 73, the career field was still without women. To remedy this shortfall, the Air Force set a quota of 41 women to be entered into the missile maintenance career field for FY 74. The Office of the Chief of Staff, Airmen Programs Branch, sent a letter that this specialty “would be filled through the Guaranteed Enlistment Program—none would be voluntarily or involuntarily entered through Basic Military Training.” Consequently, an increase in numbers was seen in 1974, and according to another Director of Women in the Air Force Historical Summary, by June 30, 1974, there were 35 women in the missile maintenance career field. Several guides were printed to assist commanders and supervisors in dealing with not only women in non-traditional fields, but the men who had no experience working with women. A new chapter in the Air Force had begun, and women were ready to make their mark upon its pages.

One of the first women to make her mark was SMSgt Patricia A Dupuis. In a phone interview on September 18, 1997, she shared the following memories spanning her 24-year career in missile maintenance. SMSgt Dupuis first visited an Air Force recruiter in June 1973 and firmly stated she wanted “No desk job!” In September 1973, her recruiter had finally found her a job away from the desk. She agreed to enter the missile maintenance career field and enlisted on October 25, 1973! At the time she was told she’d be a Titan missile mechanic, and would attend technical training at Sheppard AFB, Texas. While in basic training, SMSgt Dupuis found out that her recruiter had made a mistake. Her shred out indicated she’d be a Minuteman missile mechanic; and technical school would be at Chanute AFB, Illinois. Her immediate response to the news was not favorable. She told her trainers at Lackland AFB, Texas, in all seriousness that she “wouldn’t go to Chanute...they have snow there!” When she arrived Chanute AFB, there was another woman, Linda Price, in training for the missile maintenance career field. SMSgt Dupuis said Linda Price was bright, and was an honors graduate from technical school, but was forced out of the Air Force two months after graduation due to pregnancy. SMSgt Dupuis was sad to see her go. While at Chanute AFB, SMSgt Dupuis was housed in the same dormitory as the men, albeit in a separate wing. She stated she was well treated by students and instructors alike, and thoroughly enjoyed the technical school experience.

Upon completion of technical school, SMSgt Dupuis was assigned to Whitman AFB, Missouri. When she arrived at Whiteman AFB as

the first woman missile maintenance technician, she says she was treated the same as any other airman with exception of one incident during training. Due to her petite stature, the safety harnesses were too large, so her unit had one specially made for her. One day while she was working on the ballistic gas generators in the second launcher equipment room (LER), a Chief Master Sergeant came onsite to observe the training secession. Upon noticing there was a woman onsite, he made some comments to the men topside and went down into the second LER, where she was working. SMSgt Dupuis said he was standing so close to her that his body was touching hers, and he asked if he could get into her safety harness with her. She said she was shocked and didn’t know how to react...after all, she was an Airman and he was a Chief! Fortunately, her team chief noticed what was happening and threw the Chief off his site. SMSgt Dupuis said the incident was reported to both the WAF squadron and the missile maintenance squadron commanders, and she never saw the man again! This was the only incident of sexual harassment she experienced in her career.

After completing training, she dispatched to the field as the “cage man” on a Missile Maintenance Team (MMT). These duties consisted of working in a launch tube, suspended in a work cage 75 feet off the launch tube floor, and having “hands on” the missile. When asked about any special memories from her very first field dispatch, she said her team performed a Guidance & Control System removal and replacement at Oscar-7, and she “never thought about being the first woman to do the job...I just did the job the best I could!” During this time, she received her first Airman Performance Report (APR) in which her supervisor stated “she gives 100%...but I believe she lacks the physical stamina to perform in the field for extended periods of time. It is my opinion that her Air Force career would be greatly enhanced if she could be in a position where less physical exertion is required.” She said she met resistance from coworkers during this time, and bets were placed that she’d fail. SMSgt Dupuis didn’t fail, but excelled, and ran the field for 18 months as the “cage man!”

The next spot along her career path was team training, where she became the first woman MMT training instructor. In 1977, while a training instructor, SMSgt Dupuis became the first woman member of an Olympic Arena (OA) Competition Team. Her MMT team, on which she was the

“board man”, scored a 395 out of a possible 400 points. According to an article in her base newspaper, the *Monitor*, her team “set an OA record by accumulating the highest percentage of possible points in their event...broke the SAC time competition standard. This is the first time a Minuteman II wing has broken the time standard for this event.” Whiteman AFB won the coveted Blanchard Trophy that year!

In 1981, SMSgt Dupuis was reassigned as the first woman MMT Team Chief. She was happy to be in the field again, but it was short lived. At that time, team chief’s positions were filled by Staff Sergeants only. When she was promoted to Technical Sergeant, she requested that she be left in the field until the last possible moment. Her supervisor complied with her request, and she ran the field until she sewed it on. Against her wishes, and with the hope to return to the field as a team chief in the future, SMSgt Dupuis was assigned to Job Control. Although she hated the job, it was short lived. After six months she returned to MMT as the assistant NCOIC. During her 10.5 years at Whiteman AFB, SMSgt Dupuis remembers only two other women in missile maintenance technicians ever assigned to the base. They did not last long, and she doesn’t remember their names.

In September 1983, SMSgt Dupuis broke yet another mold in SAC when she was selected, not only as the first woman, but as the first Technical Sergeant to become NCOIC of a maintenance task force for an operational test missile launch at Vandenberg AFB. Little did she know at the time, but her dream of returning to the field as a technician was just around the corner.

In 1984, SMSgt Dupuis was reassigned to Minot AFB, North Dakota and became an MMT Team Chief once again! These were some of the best times she remembers. She had the opportunity to be challenged by a new missile system, the Minuteman III, as well as being challenged to gain the respect of her male team members since there were no other women in the career field at Minot AFB. SMSgt Dupuis not only met but conquered those challenges. Her supervisor’s words on an APR says it best: “Her team will follow her anywhere—everyone wants to be on her crew.” Eighteen months later she again promoted herself out of a job.

SMSgt Dupuis was selected for Master Sergeant in 1986 and came out of the field to become the first woman NCOIC of MMT. Her career progressed, with her being the first woman to hold positions at a missile wing: Superintendent,

Job Control Branch; NCOIC, Team Training Flight; Superintendent, Aerospace Ground Equipment Flight; and Superintendent, Training Flight. She is currently the first woman Superintendent, 5th Space Launch Squadron, Patrick AFB Florida.

SMSgt Dupuis earned several awards over the past 24 years to include: 351st Organizational Missile Maintenance Squadron Maintenance Person of the Month for November 1981; 351st Strategic Missile Wing Maintenance Airman of the Month for January 1982; 40th Air Division Maintenance Airman of the Month for January 1982; 8th Air Force ICBM Maintenance Airman of the Month for January 1982; SAC Maintenance Airman of the Month for May 1982; 91st Maintenance Squadron NCO of the Quarter for first quarter 1993; Air Force Space Command Leo Marquez Outstanding Missile Maintenance Supervisor-Manager for 1994; and Senior NCO Academy distinguished graduate and military studies award recipient for Class 95-B. Her illustrious career is a legacy to enlisted women missile maintainers; her dedication ensured the door remained open for others to follow.

One such woman is Rebecca B. Barna. She also shared memories of her 19-year career in a phone interview on September 22, 1997. MSgt Barna enlisted in the Air Force on July 10, 1978 in response to a dare! At that time, there was a push on recruiting women for missile maintenance. She agreed to the career field because it sounded like it would be fun.... plus, she had never seen a missile before, and was curious about it. Unlike when SMSgt Dupuis entered the career field, MSgt Barna had to pass a physical strength test before she was confirmed for the job! The Air Force was tired of losing technicians due to low physical strength and had enacted physical testing requirements for everyone entering the career field. MSgt Barna passed the test and began her career as the only woman at Sheppard AFB Titan II missile maintenance technical school.

After completing technical training, MSgt Barna was assigned to McConnell AFB, Kansas as an MMT technician. She went on to become a MMT Team Chief and spent four years in the field. She then went on to a special planning position and personally orchestrated depostures and missile pulls to ensure the successful deactivation of the Titan II missile wing at McConnell AFB. She remembers this as one of the highlights of her career. In 1986, after the deactivation of the wing was completed, she was laterally cross-trained into the Minuteman

maintenance career field and reassigned to Whiteman AFB.

Upon arrival at Whiteman, MSgt Barna said she heard numerous comments concerning the successes of SMSgt Dupuis—she was a living legend, and MSgt Barna strove to be like her! MSgt Barna started her tour at Whiteman in the equipment Control Section, then went on to work as Pneudraulics technician, assistant NCOIC, and finally NCOIC of Pneudraulics. Her performance was impeccable and led to her selection as the Pneudraulics quality assurance (QA) evaluator in 1994. While in QA, MSgt Barna jokingly says she assisted in the deactivation of another wing! She wrote procedures for several items on the SAVE list, including launch control center and launch control equipment building blast valves. Her efforts not only saved the cost of replacement components, but contributed to another smooth deactivation of nuclear weapons.

In August 1995, MSgt Barna was assigned to Vandenberg AFB, California and became the first woman to serve as NCOIC of the Missile Handling Team Section. Due to her many contributions during the year, she was selected as the 20th Air Force Maintenance NCO of the Year for 1995. Her outstanding performance in MHT led to her recent selection as the first woman Maintenance Expediter in the career field. MSgt Barna's contribution adds to the proud legacy of enlisted women missile maintainers.

The legacy continues with the career of SMSgt Debra G. Shaffer. SMSgt Shaffer enlisted in the Air Force on April 21, 1980. She chose the missile maintenance career field for three reasons: (1) she wanted to work with her hands, (2) she wanted to remain in the United States during her enlistment, and (3) she thought it would be exciting to work on missiles. After passing the strength test, and completing basic military training, she attended technical training at Chanute AFB. While there she was selected as the 3360th Training Group Airman of the Month and became the first missile maintenance student to achieve the "red rope" in student leadership. According to the instructor, the course was so short (13) weeks that no one had been able to accomplish that level in the allotted time. SMSgt Shaffer was like SMSgt Dupuis and MSgt Barna in that she was the lone woman in the missile maintenance course of study. She was an honors graduate from technical school and went on to her first assignment at Malmstrom AFB, Montana.

Upon arrival at Malmstrom AFB, SMSgt Shaffer was assigned to the Vehicle and Equipment Control Branch. During her three years in the branch, she was selected for Senior Airman "Below the Zone" and was named the 341st Field Missile Maintenance Squadron NCO of the Quarter in 1982. She remembers only one other woman, Kathy Renner, in the missile maintenance career field at Malmstrom AFB. MSgt Renner retired from Vandenberg AFB in the early 1990s after working as a Mechanical Shop technician and a QA evaluator during the latter part of her career. SMSgt Shaffer exercised her Base of Preference prerogative in April 1983, and was assigned to Vandenberg AFB.

Vandenberg AFB was the hub of the missile maintenance world...the place where test launches were conducted to verify our missiles in the field would do the job they were assigned to do. Three days after SMSgt Shaffer arrived, a loud rumble awoke her in the middle of the night, and she was convinced when the windows began to shake that an earthquake was taking place! When she reported for work the next morning and told everyone how scary her first earthquake had been, imagine her embarrassment when told it was nothing more than a missile launch. Over the next 13 years, though she experienced numerous launches of several different weapon systems, she never quite got over the initial surprise of shaking ground and deafening roar when a missile launches into the sky.

SMSgt Shaffer's first job at Vandenberg was as a Refurbishment technician. These folks completely strip and rebuild the launch facilities after a missile launch to get it ready for the next one. Since she hadn't run in the field while at Malmstrom, she was tremendously excited about finally getting down to some "real" work. When assigned to a team, she was bound and determined to prove her ability to do the job without physical assistance from a man. She carried her own weight, and hoisted equipment and components so successfully her teammates referred to her as "King Kong's sister!" She was trained as the first woman launch tube technician, and was cheerfully ensconced in a work cage, hanging in the launch tube for four hours after a missile launch, touching components still hot and smelling of missile blast residue. SMSgt Shaffer eventually became a launch tube team chief, and then a Refurbishment team chief. During this time, she attended Airman Leadership School in February 1985, and was recognized with the Academic Achievement Award

and the John Levitow Honor Graduate Award. She was also selected as the SAC Maintenance Airman of the Month for May 1985. When she became pregnant, her time in the field came to an end. As was the case with SMSgt Dupuis, SMSgt Shaffer refused to leave the field any earlier than was necessary, and even though it made some of her supervisors nervous, she knew she could handle the rigors of the job, even during pregnancy. Since there were no maternity fatigues, she changed into coveralls every morning on site before going to work. She worked in the launch tube until she could no longer comfortably wear a safety harness and fit in the work basket and continued to climb ladders to the equipment rooms until her stomach finally got in the way. Even then, there was work to be done topside, and SMSgt Shaffer took care of her team every day until she was 7 ½ months pregnant. She remembers her three years in Refurbishment as the best of her career, but realizes it was time to move on.

She went on to spend three years in Maintenance Control, during which she was a Distinguished Graduate from the NCO Academy, and then spent another four years in QA. While in QA, she had the distinct pleasure of assisting in formulating missile stage measurement techniques in support of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). The measurements had to be precise. They had to prove to the Russians, without a doubt, that the missile stages in the United States identified either in storage or on site were in fact correctly identified. Vandenberg AFB was the test base for these procedures, and once verified through too many “dry runs” to count, SMSgt Shaffer compiled the checklists which are now used fleet-wide. Upon completion of this major project, she returned to the job she loved; Refurbishment.

Although no longer a technician due to her selection for promotion to Master Sergeant, SMSgt Shaffer couldn't wait to again be a “Furber.” The saying goes, “Once a Furber, always a Furber,” and it certainly held true for her. As the first woman NCOIC of Refurbishment, she led her teams to maintain four Minuteman and three Peacekeeper missile launch facilities for the test program. It was a challenging job. Equipment was beginning to show its age, and vehicles were continuously breaking down. Many times, it seemed a miracle when the sites were ready on-time. It was during this time in her career that SMSgt Shaffer was selected for numerous awards, culminating in her selection as one of the Twelve Outstanding Airmen in the Air Force for 1995. She realized at the time

that it was the professional men (and one woman) in her section and their dedication to the job, which earned her this honor. She dedicated the award to them and remembers them with more fondness and appreciation than can be put into words. SMSgt Shaffer was reassigned as the NCOIC of Peacekeeper Transportation and Handling in August 1995, and was reassigned to her current position at Headquarters, Air Force Space Command, July 1996.

It should be evident that the missile maintenance career field began as a “no woman allowed” profession which evolved over a period of several years to become, in January 1973, non-gender specific. Even then, very few women picked up the gauntlet. It became necessary for the Air Force to specifically target women and set quotas for the career field. Fortunately, the Air Force was able to recruit several outstanding women to serve and unfortunately, they couldn't all be covered in this paper. One of the first, most experienced and more revered women in the career field was SMSgt Dupuis. Her contributions and tenacity definitely paved the way for others to follow. Two such women were MSgt Barna and SMSgt Shaffer, strong women who added to the legacy begun by SMSgt Dupuis. The careers of these three women reflect dedication, integrity, and a refusal to be set aside. Their pioneering efforts and stories must be told to ensure the next generation of women are afforded the same opportunity for rewarding careers in whatever maintenance fields they may choose!

The Happiest of All Missileers?

Monte Watts, AAFM Board Member

Once a quarter, I am afforded the opportunity to teach a session of the ICBM Scripts Scenario Course (SSC), which is a mandatory training course for all of the Minuteman III OSS and OGV instructor/evaluators that bring their weapon system experience to bear in creating the command line computer code that develops into realistic training/evaluation scenarios in the Missile Procedures Trainer (MPT). Over the past 25 years of instructing, there have been many memorable students who sat through the endless PowerPoint slides and “Back in my day...” stories to then start building the lesson plans that truly make a difference in keeping our missileers' skills current and highly proficient.

One young officer stood out to me during the first course in 2024 who goes by the callsign “Happy”. I quickly learned that this was a fitting moniker, not just because it was easier to pronounce, but because Capt. Adeniyi Adewuyi may just be the happiest missileer I have ever met with his positive attitude, smile and laugh that punctuates his statements, questions and responses to everything that comes his way.

Happy was born in 1986 in Ilesa, Osun State, Nigeria. From a young age, his parents advocated the importance of education to him and his siblings and worked diligently to build a better future for their children. Happy earned his bachelor’s degree in Earth Sciences with Applied Geophysics Option at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria in 2010 and immigrated to America that same year. After becoming a U.S. citizen at age 29, he enlisted in the Air Force in August 2016.

When asked why he chose the Air Force, he recalled “when I was in Norman, Oklahoma, I joined a friend of mine to see the Army recruiter because he was about to leave for his basic training. While I was there, I was able to listen to the pep talk from other military branches’ recruiters (Marines, Navy, and Air Force). Those recruiters explained job opportunities available if I intend to serve in the U.S. military. After that encounter, I talked to my wife about it, and she felt that the Air Force would be a better opportunity for us. After meeting with an Air Force recruiter, she delivered a detailed explanation of the opportunities available for us. I scheduled my ASVAB test, and we decided to take a leap of faith from there.”

“My first assignment was to 90 LRS/LGRV at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, from 2017-2019 where I worked on soft and tactical vehicles that security forces and missileers were using for day-to-day operations in the missile field. I also had an opportunity to deploy to Al-Udeid in Qatar from January to July 2018.”

“I had numerous opportunities to communicate with missileers each time they stopped by my unit to drop off their vehicles for periodic maintenance, but I did not know I would ever want to be a missileer. During my time at 90 LRS/LGRV, I was introduced to a fellow Nigerian and missileer, Ramon Ayoad, who provided me with mentorship and guidance when I was working on my Officer Training School (OTS) package. I also took a bold step to reach out to others at higher levels, who were able to support me and my Air Force journey.”

“I am grateful to have been picked up on my first look for OTS. I am forever thankful to those that encouraged and guided me throughout the process. I was surrounded by many that saw my potential.”

Those that supported his goals included his chain of command: 90 LRS/LGRV (Mr. Anthony Janssen), 90 LRS/CC (Maj (ret) Marc Hernandez), 90 MW/CC (then Col. now Maj. Gen. Stacy Huser, 20 AF/CC) and 20AF/CC (then Maj. Gen. now General Anthony Cotton, now USSTRATCOM/CC) and AFGSC/CC (General (ret) Robin Rand who endorsed him for OTS.

“I am a believer in God, so while my engagements with those mentioned above proved to be worthwhile, I do believe that I would not be where I am today if not for the plans God had in store for me. Prior to even enlisting in the Air Force, my goal had been to be an Air Force officer. How this would happen, I did not know, but I was and still am determined to make the best of my journey. After talking to my friends and mentors, I was encouraged to think of the perks of being a missileer in terms of family and career. Because of my faith and engagement with those mentioned, I came into this career field with an open heart and a positive attitude.”

After graduating from OTS in June 2019, Happy was assigned to the ICBM Initial Skills Training at the ICBM schoolhouse as a student in the 532 TRS. “My experience at the schoolhouse at Vandenberg Space Force Base, California prepared me with the necessary ICBM knowledge needed to effectively do my job at my first missile assignment, back at F,E, Warren. I enjoyed alert duty because it allowed me to understand the strategic importance nuclear weapons play in protecting the American people and U.S. allies. I am glad to be a missileer making sure that we are ready 24/7/365 days to defend this nation from any threats.”



“After three years of pure crew experience, it is important to instill the knowledge I have gained to new crew members. My second tour allows me to teach in the field and in the MPT. Being an evaluator is great as it allows me to ensure that the crew members are proficient and qualified to perform their job. One of my duties at the 90 OG/OGV is to create evaluation scripts by building challenging and different scenarios for evaluating crews. There is pleasure in seeing what I have done behind the scenes being used to achieve the 90 OG/CC’s intent for standardization/evaluation.”

Capt. Adewuyi continues to honor his parent’s guidance to pursue a lifetime of learning and completed a master’s degree in Geophysical Engineering from Montana Tech, in Butte, Montana, in 2014 and he is currently working on earning another master’s degree in international relations, National Security concentration from Troy University in summer 2024. He has career aspirations to be considered for other nuclear-related opportunities including Striker Interns, Nuclear Command and Control section at National Security Agency; ALCS Intelligence Officer and Strike Planner at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, or career broadening experiences including Officer Training School or Squadron Officers School instructor positions and hopes to eventually relocate his family to the D.C., Maryland, or Virginia area.

August 2024 will mark 10 years of marriage to his wife Omotola, who excels as a career nurse, and jointly raising their three children, Nathan, Isabelle, and Faith. As Happy says, “I couldn’t imagine making it this far without their love and support.”

“What motivates me every day is my oath to defend the United States against all enemies and I see myself being an important part of this mandate. In addition to that, I truly do enjoy the career I am in.”

So how did he get the callsign “Happy”? Capt Adewuyi explains “Funny enough, my fellow colleagues picked out quite a bit of other names with long explanations and rationale during the Callsign Event. In the end ‘Happy’ was given to me because in conversations with many of my team members, I always appear cheerful and positive even when things are not necessarily going well. I pride myself in being positive and in the small moments that I am not, I try to seek solutions. I am glad that many people saw the ‘happy’ trait in me and gave me the nickname because I am ‘happy’ to be a source of encouragement for many.”

50th Anniversary of The Groobers

Maj (ret) Greg Ogletree, AAFM Life Member

The Who? No, that was a British rock band that charted hit songs beginning back in the early sixties. The Groobers came along about a dozen years later, and their four members never charted a hit, but many of their tunes are still familiar to most people, in and outside the missile community. Why? To those who have never heard of The Groobers, you can read Chapter 26, titled “Grooving to the Groobers,” in Scott Cook’s 2021 book, *Rehearsing for Doomsday: Memoir of a Nuclear Missile Crew Commander*, (a highly recommended read, by the way) or you can continue reading this and the answer will soon become apparent.

Back in early 1974, two missile crew members, Capt. Rolland R. “Rollie” Stoneman of the 321st Strategic Missile Squadron (SMS), and 1st Lt. George L. “Butch” Theisen II of the 320 SMS, neighbors at Francis E. Warren AFB, Wyoming, “had been singing old folk songs in each other’s living rooms for several months before Butch volunteered them as entertainment for a training division Christmas party.” Rollie had changed the lyrics of the song “Little Boxes”—a hit by Pete Seeger a decade earlier—making them applicable to Air Force missile crew members. The parody was a smashing success at the party and the word soon spread.

Not long after, Rollie and Butch agreed that a trio would be better than a twosome, so they recruited Capt. Malcolm Lee McCown, commander of a different crew in Butch’s squadron, and in the spring of 1974 named their group the New Warren Groobers. In the words of one writer, “Malcolm brought with him an uncanny ability to imitate John Denver and a lead-guitar style that blended perfectly to the tone of the group.” By the time November arrived, the group had provided entertainment for a number of small squadron parties and informal get-togethers, but their show at a base-wide event that month resulted in numerous bookings for upcoming events. It was clear now that this group had a future!

In early 1975, the trio became a quartet when Capt. Wallace S. “Wally” Odd II, a squadron mate of Theisen and McCown, joined the group. Wally’s mastery with an eclectic array of instruments, including the wood block, spoons, “gut bucket,” and even the tambourine, completed the

Groobers' sought-after sound. And before they could barely catch their breath between gigs, it happened: They went national!



But before discussing those missile comp performances, let's get an answer to the question many missileers have been asking for decades: why was the name "Groobers" chosen? To answer that question, this writer figured there is no better person to ask than one of the two original members of the band, so I contacted Rollie Stoneman, now a retired lieutenant colonel, and he obligingly agreed to answer all of my questions about The Groobers. The email interview went like this:

Q: Why the name "The Groobers"?

A: Gerald Schlueter, one of my MCCCs in the 90 DOV liked to refer to the other members of DOV, but primarily the DMCCCs, as groobers. The band took the name in recognition of all the basic crew dogs doing their best to do their best day in and day out and the groobers became The Groobers.

Q: Is it true the name was originally the New Warren Groobers?

A: That's correct. I was a fan of the New Christy Minstrels and thought New Warren Groobers sounded cool. It may have lasted all of a month. All

along, everyone referred to us as just The Groobers so that's what we were. Plus, the word "new" implied that there had been some Old Warren Groobers.

Q: You are undoubtedly aware the popularity of The Groobers' songs spawned similar groups at other missile bases several years later. At Malmstrom, we had THE CRIT-TERS, on the face of it just another "bug" name like some groups of the 1960s/1970s, but also alluding to busting a checkride by making a Critical Error. I heard one of the other bases (Whiteman?) had a group named The Warbletones. These groups performed your songs but also wrote and performed some of their own. Did you have any contact with these other groups and do you remember the names of any others and where they were?

A: We were aware of those two groups but never had the opportunity to connect or hear any of their stuff. Would have been fun. Honestly, it's really humbling to think that others thought we were important enough to copy us and then add their own original material. I'm not aware of any other groups but I hope there have been some.

Q: A number of the songs on the 1964 album titled "Bill Durham's Songs of SACK" have the same tunes and similar titles to those recorded by The Groobers. Were you aware of that album in the early 1970s and, if so, to what extent did it influence the songs on The Groobers' album, "Missile Duty's Pleasin'...?"

A: Now there's a name I haven't heard in years. The only real influence was that sharing parodies and satire seemed to be a great stress reliever. Later on, it was great to see that the songs built community throughout the missile force. I guess we expressed in song what others were feeling. A lot of songs like that bounced around in one form or another from WWI, WWII, to Vietnam, etc., with lyrics being adapted to the current circumstances of the writer.

Q: I read that you wrote the lyrics for ten of the eleven songs on "Missile Duty's Pleasin'...?" Did you or any of the other Groobers ever write any other songs after the album was recorded? If so, were they delivered to audiences and do the titles, scores, and lyrics still exist?

A: We did a number of songs by other artists like John Denver, The Eagles, Roger Whittaker, to name a few. Our shows would have been really short, repetitive, and probably a bit boring if we did only

missile songs. I wrote one called “Sing Out For Liberty” that we did frequently during the American Bicentennial year. There was never a written score. I sang it for the group, the other guys built their harmonies, and then we divided the verses. We never had anything other than lyrics written down. Ed Hershberger, the governor of Wyoming at the time, asked us to do a song that a friend of his, Mrs. Vicky Devine, had written called “Wonderful Wyoming.” She wrote original lyrics to the tune of “The Whiffenpoof Song.” She had presented it as a possible state song. To my knowledge, it didn't get that far but the response was great whenever we did it at various shows locally in the Cheyenne area. The harmonies were reminiscent of The Lettermen.

Q: The album cover for the record in my collection contains the autographs of all four Groobers above each of their caricatures on the front. Was this done frequently or are the autographed album covers rare?

A: After the album was produced, we had a bunch with us at every show. We signed them for anyone who wanted it.

That concluded our rapid-fire email exchange, so I will now pick up where I left off before it began.

I mentioned earlier that the group “went national” by performing at the Olympic Arena missile competition in 1975 when military and civilians from all nine missile wings across the country gathered at Vandenberg AFB. Not surprisingly, the performance impressed General Russell E. Dougherty, Commander-in-Chief of Strategic Air Command (CINCSAC), who later that year at a special dining-out presented The Groobers with an award “recognizing their performance at Olympic Arena and their contribution to the coming of age of the missile force.” The CINCSAC-level support was not unprecedented. A previous SAC commander, General Thomas S. Power, had been so enamored with Bull Durham’s songs about SAC that he arranged for a T-39 aircraft to fly Durham’s band to every SAC base! But those songs were intended for the flying community (yes, “the pilots get all the gravy....”). Dougherty figured songs about missileers deserved equal time, and why visit all missile bases when representatives from each of those gathered every year at Vandenberg? It was almost a given that The Groobers would provide an encore performance the next year at Olympic Arena ’76. It was in between those two events that the group went south, geographically speaking.

In mid-December 1975, after being encouraged by both CINCSAC and their wing commander, Col Christopher S. Adams, Jr., the four Groobers headed down the highway from Cheyenne to Denver to have their songs professionally recorded at the Great American Music Machine, Inc. The result was the vinyl LP titled, “Missile Duty’s Pleasin’...?” Just four hundred copies were pressed (none of the company-grade officers was independently wealthy, they had bills to pay and families to feed). In fact, The Groobers probably would not have gone to Olympic Arena either time had it not been for the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee, whose support was key to the group’s transition from a local attraction to a band known throughout the entire missile community.

My final request of Rollie was to bring us up to date on the lives of the four band members following the release of their album almost 50 years ago. He graciously provided enough information for me to assemble the following brief bio’s:

Rolland “Rollie” Stoneman, Lt Col (Ret.)

Following his crew time, including a stint in DOV, Rollie was a controller at the Warren wing command post until 1977, when he was hired on at the USAF Academy (USafa) where he served as registrar, academic affairs staff officer, and executive officer until 1983. That was followed by a schoolhouse tour in the 4315 CCTS at Vandenberg where he served first as chief of the Minuteman Mod (44 SMW) training section, then as chief of EWO training. From there it was back to Colorado in 1987 where he helped set up the new 1013 CCTS, patterned after the 4315th, and then served as its first Stan Eval chief. He followed that as the Director of Training Support for both the Training and Stan Eval Divisions. His final assignment, also in the Rocky Mountain State, was back to the USAFA’s Office of Admissions as Director of Selections, responsible for selecting each new class of cadets for both the Academy and the USAF Prep School. Rollie retired from active duty in 1993 and then worked with Focus On the Family for a couple years before returning to the USAFA Office of Admissions to do the same job he had done there previously while in uniform. He retired from that job at the end of 2008. From that time to the present, the former Groober has been working at The Classical Academy (TCA) College Pathways, where he “helped start a new college prep high school and junior high with a unique hybrid-online

design.” Rollie is currently the Director of College Planning.

Wallace “Wally” Odd, Lt Col (Ret.) Like Rollie, Wally spent time in “the shop” too, but as an instructor rather than an evaluator, and it was while he was still a deputy. After his crew tour ended in 1976, it was “North to Alaska” for a year, but rather than the Nome that Johnny Horton sang about, it was Kotzebue AFS, just north of the Arctic Circle, where Wally served as Director of Operations at the remote radar site there. From the frozen Far North, he PCS’d to Tyndall AFB, Florida, for duty at the Air Interceptor Weapons School from 1977-1981. That was followed by four years slightly farther north at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, for several jobs at Squadron Officer School. Then above the CONUS yet again, this time to North Bay, Ontario for several jobs, including squadron commander, at the Canadian NORAD Region HQ. In 1988-89, Wally did duty at the Pentagon, with duty titles longer than I can fit in a brief bio. His final four years of active duty was as Senior Policy Analyst in the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President, the White House. Wally hung up his uniform in 1993 and took charge of The Language Arts, Inc., doing “highly classified” work similar to what he had been doing in uniform. In 1996 he became a program manager (PM) at Comprehensive Technologies, Inc.; in 1998 a PM for ITS Services; from 2006-2009 Executive Director, Alumni Utah State University; from 2009-2016 Executive Vice President, Morrell Agro Industries Ethiopia, Africa; and from 2009 to the present, president and/or board member of several veteran and charitable organizations.

George “Butch” Theisen, Lt Col (Ret.) Butch served as an instructor in DOT at the Wyoming base before heading to Clark AB in 1976 where he was the executive officer to the commander of an F-4 Phantom II avionics squadron. He left the Philippines in 1979 to command a courier detachment at Wright-Patterson AFB until 1982, then he was off to the courier contingent at Fort Meade, Maryland, for similar duty. In 1985, Butch was selected to command Port Austin AFS, Michigan, site of the 754th Radar Squadron, and he closed it down in 1988. His final posting was Norton AFB in sunny California, where he initially served as the executive officer for the C-141 and C-9 wing based there, and then in various command positions until retiring from active duty in 1996. For the next five years, Butch worked as a Marriage and

Family Therapist in a counseling clinic in San Bernardino, and then in 2001 he opened his own clinic in Crestline, California, finally retiring for good in 2017.

Malcolm McCown, Major (Ret.) (1949-2023)

Unlike his Groober compatriots, Malcolm skipped working in “the shop” at the wing, and after finishing his crew tour in 1976 headed to Peterson AFB and Cheyenne Mountain, where he worked until 1979. Then, it was off to the “Black Pearl of the Aleutians” for a year at Shemya AFB, Alaska. His remote tour on “The Rock” was followed by three years at Offutt AFB with the HQ SAC IG team. Then, after a couple years serving in the National Military Command Center at the Pentagon, Malcolm returned to Pete Field, where he retired from active duty in 1991. In “retirement,” Malcolm was a Sales Associate at a Ford dealership in Colorado Springs for a couple years, held various positions in the Human Resources Division at EMPAK, Inc. from 1993-1997, and then served in several managerial positions with the Pinkerton Government and Security Agency, providing security for Lockheed-Martin, until 2002. He was “semi-retired” for the next 10 years and finally fully retired in 2013. Regrettably, after a four-year battle, Malcolm succumbed to Alzheimer’s Disease on May 20, 2023.

So, sadly, the former quartet is once again a trio. I am happy to report, however, that rumor has it (“according to a squadron secretary who got the word third hand from the cook at Echo who learned also from a semi-reliable source”) that one or more of the remaining Groobers will be attending the AAFM reunion in October this year, so if you are interested in a face-to-face “grip and grin”/“Shake and take” photo op with someone you can personally accuse of infecting you with an “earworm” of a regrettably unforgettable Groobers’ missile song, make your reservation now for the 2024 AAFM Reunion in Buellton, California—within site and sound of things frequently streaking skyward from Vandenberg SFB. It will be a blast, and you are cordially invited!

IMPORTANT NEWS FLASH:

AAFM is devoting an entire chapter of its upcoming book on Minuteman art to the Groobers which will include more pictures, all of the lyrics, stories behind the lyrics, and a QR code that will give you access to a digital version of the original recording.

AAFM 12th Missile Squadron Heritage Display

Jim Warner, AAFM Executive Director

In our August 2023 newsletter, an appeal was made to help the 12 MS Red Dawgs gather uniforms for a historical display in the squadron's hallway and our AAFM membership answered the call with overwhelming support! The project, being led by 1Lt Nora Dochota, was able to gather uniforms representing each period of ICBM operations from the 12 MS activation through present day.

Special thanks to AAFM members Colonel Richard McKinney, USAF (retired), who donated a set of his SAC era two-piece crew blues and Capt Taylor Yost for the AFGSC era flight suit. Assembling period correct crew whites took some research by AAFM's resident historian Greg Ogletree, who was able to find examples in photos of 12th Strategic Missile Squadron crews wearing a variety of coverall configurations. With a 12 SMS patch from Colonel Mike Hickey, USAF (retired), a vintage metal pocket rocket and 341st Strategic Missile Wing patch from AAFM Board Member Monte Watts' personal collection, and some help from eBay in locating a pristine set of crew whites from the period, a complete uniform was assembled.



Lt Col Tyler Cisneros (12 MS/CC) accepts SAC era crew whites, AFSPC era blue coverall and leather jacket uniform items from AAFM Board Member Monte Watts at Malmstrom AFB, MT on Oct 17, 2023.

From the AFSPC period, Monte personally donated the one-piece crew blues with nametags, patches and his leather jacket worn as a member of the 12 MS in the 1990s.

We will bring you updates on this project as uniform cases are put in place and the final displays are assembled.

Some Off-Colored Paint, A Pizza Box And Blast Door

Maj (ret) Tony Gatlin

At sixty years of age now, I reflect back over my life and there are a few moments that stand out – a few moments that rise above the rest and really serve as mile markers on my life's journey and my thirty years with the US military.

One such mile marker is the time I spent on missile crew at Ellsworth Air Force Base with the 44th Strategic Missile Wing (SMS) in the late 1980s, early 1990s. I enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1983 and was trained as an 0351, Anti-tank Assault Gunner, with the First Marine Division. My primary weapon was the M47 Dragon, a guided anti-tank missile. I enjoyed (mostly) my time as an infantryman and learned lots, but I always knew I was destined for greater things. By 1989, I finished my undergraduate degree and applied for commissioning as an officer in the Marines and the Air Force as well. The Air Force called first, and after six years of grunt life, I was more than ready to cross into the blue.

I knew the world had changed for me when I arrived at Officer Training School in San Antonio, and people said things to me like, "please," and "thank you," and "would you like to...". When our troop handlers asked us the first night we arrived what kind of pizza we'd like to order, I thought it was some kind of trap. As a recently former Marine (literally still had the USMC uniform on that morning), I thought I was on to their tricks, and our handlers would eat our favorite pizza while making us watch or engage in some other sadistic form of punishment. But the other shoe never dropped, and I finished my commissioning in the summer of 1989 without incident.

Either ironically or by grand design, the Air Force decided they would take a former Marine grunt, trained to blow up small things like jeeps and tanks, and train him to be a missileer with the potential to blow up much larger things.

After training at Vandenberg Air Force Base, I was sent to the 44 SMS at Ellsworth and assigned to the 66th Strategic Missile Squadron commanded by Lt Col George Kodat. I began pulling alerts, primarily at Bravo and Delta Launch Control Centers east of Ellsworth, near Wall and the Badlands. Interestingly, my first alert was actually another historical mile marker. I pulled alert on the 9th and 10th of November 1989, the day and night the Berlin Wall fell. It was the beginning of the end of the Cold War, and the missile system would soon feel the winds of change.

By 1990, I was crewed with Captain Rob Drury, and we were designated as the Flight Crew at Delta 01. As such, it was our responsibility to perform all the routine administrative and minor maintenance tasks required to keep the capsule in good working order. We collated and archived crew logs; kept the publications in the capsule up to date; made sure all the appropriate safety signage was displayed; heck, we even ordered SAC Form-1 (toilet paper) when supplies ran low. We did a lot to keep the capsule nice and neat. But the most memorable task I performed while on the Flight Crew at Delta was not an official act; it wasn't routine maintenance or even sanctioned upkeep. I am the guy who designed and painted the Domino's Pizza Box artwork on the blast door at Delta 01 – that piece of morale art that has now become something of a Cold War icon.

I've been asked over the years how I came up with the idea. I wish I could say it was something cosmic – something inspired – but it really came down to a supply issue. In the early days of the missile system, an act of vandalism like painting on the blast door would have landed someone in the brig (the Air Force has brigs, right?). But in the waning days of the Strategic Air Command and the Cold War, things got a little more, shall we say, lighter? A little more loosey-goosey, if you will. Morale art started to pop up a little more frequently, and it didn't seem to get painted over as quickly as it once did. A fellow crew member, Steve Lockwood, painted an inspired mural in the vestibule area at the base of the elevator at Delta 01 sometime in this era. It was (and still is) a Soviet flag in tatters as a Minuteman missile tore through it. The piece is now referred to as "Victory in the Cold War," although I don't remember ever hearing that name applied to it back then. With that Soviet flag on the wall as inspiration, I decided I wanted to paint an American flag on the blast door as a counterpoint. In my day, the blast door was a gray blank slate. I have seen

pictures of a previous art piece on the door of a coyote and roadrunner, but that piece was apparently painted over at some point, probably in advance of a higher-headquarters inspection, and in 1990 the door was a pristine blank canvas calling out to me to be painted.

I told Rob about my idea. We brainstormed the concept and came up with an awesome image of Old Glory waving in the breeze. We planned to draw it out and paint it over our next two alerts at Delta. We didn't ask anyone for permission to paint the door. In all honesty, we did it more-or-less in secret because we didn't want to risk getting into trouble. When we arrived for our next alert, I called up to the facility manager and asked him if he had red, white and blue paint on hand for the project. He said, "of course, patriotic lieutenant; I'll send down what I've got." When the paint arrived at the base of the elevator, I was crestfallen. The paint wasn't the glorious red, white and blue of Old Glory, but was more light red, off white and baby blue. I said out loud, "I can't paint an American flag with this; it'll look like a Domino's pizza box." And that's when inspiration struck us.



"Crewmember Gatlin" courtesy of the Minuteman Missile National Historic Park

Domino's, of course, famously had its marketing campaign of "Thirty Minutes or Less or Your Next Pizza is Free" running in the late 80's. The paint the facility manager sent down was almost exactly the color of the Domino's pizza box, so we combined the two ideas, altered the Domino's logo to a Minuteman missile, and so the artwork was born. My first thought on the wording for the piece was "Rapid City to Moscow in 30 Minutes or Less," but Rob pointed out that we were still operational, and that might be a little too "revealing." So, we changed the phrase to "Worldwide Delivery in 30 Minutes or Less, or

Your Next One is Free.” We drew it on the door over one alert and painted it the next. It’s certainly no Davinci, and the missile is pretty wonky-looking, but we were still operational and had to at least “try” to maintain a two-person concept with the door open for a few minutes at a time, while we listened for alarm bells and phone calls in the capsule. I even drew parts of the design with my left hand so Rob could still see me from the tunnel junction.

We finished the artwork anonymously. We would hear feedback from time to time over the next few months that the crews who saw it got a kick out of it. And that made us smile. We had done it just for the esprit de corps and camaraderie it would bring, so our plan worked. We never intended the piece to be seen by anyone other than us crewdogs who pulled alert at Delta, and we certainly never imagined it would live on the way it has. I think we both expected that the piece would be painted over once the higher-ups got wind of it. But lo and behold, in 1991, the wing received the now-famous stand-down order from President Bush, the START Treaty was signed, and the missile system was soon on the chopping block – a victim of its own success in winning the Cold War. I thought for sure the capsule would be destroyed along with the rest in the wing, and the blast door art would be relegated to history. But by some stroke of luck or fate or karma, Delta 01 was spared, and the capsule along with the blast door and our artwork lived on.

By the Fall of 1992, I was reassigned to Little Rock Air Force Base and retrained as a mission support officer. Capt Drury moved on to other operational assignments and separated some years after our crew time. Neither of us ever publicly claimed responsibility for our graffiti, and so it was with great surprise that I received a phone call in 2003 while assigned to RAF Mildenhall in the UK from a reporter from the Smithsonian Magazine. Now a major and a squadron commander, I was taken aback when the reporter asked if I was former Lieutenant Gatlin of the 66th Strategic Missile Squadron. My first thought was “oh, man, I’m in trouble now.” I hesitatingly affirmed I was, and he then asked if I was the one who’d painted the Domino’s Pizza box on the blast door at Delta 01 Launch Control Center. I asked him, rather defensively, “how in the world do you know that?” He replied, “I’m a reporter... it’s my job to know.” We went on to conduct an interview that led to an article in the Smithsonian, and, to my knowledge, that was the first time it had been

publicly acknowledged that Rob and I were the “artists.” The reporter never revealed to me how he came to know my name.

Fast forward many years and many, many miles, the missile wing is now long gone, and the only remaining capsule from the 44th, Delta 01, is now the Minuteman Missile National Historic Site. The Air Force declared the site along with the Launch Facility at Delta 09 a National Historic Site in 1999 and transferred these sites to the National Park Service in 2002. In 2014, the new Visitor Center and museum were dedicated nearby. I visited the park in 2018 and shared my story with the staff who recorded it as part of their oral history collection. In the Spring of 2023, I read that the park was looking for seasonal staff to help at the museum and give tours and lectures. I emailed the acting chief of interpretation, and almost immediately, my phone began to ring. After going through the formalities of a federal job application, I was hired as an actual uniform-wearing, smokey-the-bear-hat-sporting park ranger. I spent this past summer living in government quarters in the Badlands National Park and giving daily tours of Delta 01 and the museum to thousands of visitors from around the world.



“Ranger Gatlin” photo courtesy of Colt Gatlin

To say it was surreal to be back is an understatement. I'm secure enough to admit I got misty eyed on my first solo tour back down in the capsule. I'm sure the visitors thought the old ranger had lost his marbles, but when I explained that Delta 01 was my former home away from home during the Cold War, they understood immediately, hugged me, and thanked me profusely for what I'd done. Visitors were gobsmacked (as the Brits say) when they learned I was the guy who had painted the Domino's box. The very personal stories I was able to share with them about my time on crew and what it meant to us then and now really seemed to resonate with visitors. It put a human side to the story that they wouldn't have gotten by just visiting the museum or touring the capsule. It was humbling to represent missileers in this way – all the men and women who'd served in any capacity over the years, from ops, to maintainers, security forces, and support staff – it just meant a lot to be back and tell our story to an audience who was awed by what we had done. Sometimes, I think we all might tend to sell ourselves short as to our place in history, but for me, my time at Delta 01 is a mile marker on a mission I'm proud to have played a part.

Seeking Information

Jim Warner, AAFM Executive Director

Steve Geigle is looking for a large 3' by 3' hand-carved 67 SMS logo that was created for the Hotel-01 day room in the 1981-82 time frame. It shows a missile that looks like a shark coming out of the silo. The base paper did an article on the carving with a photo. Steve never saved a picture of the piece so he would love to have a picture and is curious where it ended up. If you have any information, please contact me at Director@AFMissileers.org.

Reposting A Book Review

Jim Warner, AAFM Executive Director

Based on a recommendation of a fellow missileer, I just finished rereading Scott Cook's *Rehearsing for Doomsday: Memoirs of a Nuclear Missile Crew Commander*. Set in the late 1980's and early 1990's Scott recalls his missile life from OTS through Vandenberg training and then his four years on crew. His humor makes it an easy read while accurately explaining life as a crew member before the Force Improvement Program. It's a fast read with little to no acronyms and a layman's

explanation of what we all experienced. Take a look, I'm sure you will enjoy it.

308 SMW Reunion

Linda Aldrich, AAFM Board of Directors

Dates: 11-13 October 2024

Location: Desert Diamond Casino, Tuscon, AZ

Plan to arrive on Friday, Oct 11 and enjoy an Icebreaker that evening. Saturday, Oct 12, will include a Titan II Museum tour and Pima Air Museum Tour with transportation provided. There will be a buffet dinner on Saturday evening. Room cost is \$124/night and reservation information can be found on the 308 SMW Facebook page. For more information, contact Linda Aldrich at 308SMWlittlerock@gmail.com.



Educating the Public

Jim Warner, AAFM Executive Director

Last month, while working on the upcoming Minuteman Art book, I had a chance to share an early draft of the book with family. I never really talked about my missile time outside of my immediate family and even then, my wife was probably the only one who really understood what I

did for a living. So, when I started going through parts of the book that included the history of Minuteman and life as a missileer before I even got to the art, they were wide eyed! After seeing the pictures of the LCC and missile art, the questions started coming. For almost two hours I answered questions about missiles in general (do we still have missiles on alert?) and told stories. The next day, I sent them a link to John Molison's YouTube interview with Maj Gen (ret) Bob Parker (<https://vimeo.com/209494536>). As noted in the video, I encouraged them to pay attention to the comments of young missileers at the end. Later, I received an email with one word: Respect!

It hit me that while I talk ICBMs every day, I may have failed at one of the core missions of AAFM: Communicate: wherever, whenever! Many of you talk ICBMs every day, especially with those who understand the mission. But do you share your experiences with others? Not just family and friends but neighbors, local veterans' organizations, community libraries or the Rotary Club? Our work has been referred to as the "Silent Sentinel" but that doesn't mean we should be quiet about our mission experience.

Thanks to the hard work of AAFM member Cory Kuehn, we now have a powerpoint slide deck that can be used for such occasions. The deck covers the history of ICBMs from Atlas to Sentinel. If you would like to use a copy of the briefing for a presentation, please let me know and I'll make sure you get it. The briefing only provides the historical perspective—you'll have to provide the personal perspective. Hopefully the upcoming Minuteman book can help with that too. Let's share the word on the ICBM role in nuclear deterrence!

AAFM National Meeting in Buellton, CA 23-27 October 2024

Registration: Online at www.afmissileers.org or complete the form on the last page of this newsletter. Closeout date is 23 September 2024.

Hotel Reservations: We will be using the [Santa Ynez Valley Marriott](#). Rate is \$189/night with an increase on Saturday night. There is no airport shuttle.

Not Staying at the Hotel? - If you are staying in an RV, other hotel or with friends, or live in the area, you can attend any or all of the events. Complete the reservation form for the events you would like to attend. Check with the front desk for parking permits.

Hospitality Suite - Open every day when no other activities are scheduled, with snacks and refreshments and some items from the AAFM store. Registration fee covers suite operation.

Attire - Casual dress for all events except for the Banquet: business casual (open collar shirts, coats optional, no jeans)

Special Needs - Let us know of any special diet needs, handicapped access, etc.

Schedule of Events –

Wednesday, 23 October 2024

1300 - Registration, Hospitality Suite open – Early Bird \$35 until August 15th; then \$40

1800 - Welcome Reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres and pay as you go bar - \$28 per person.

Dinner on your own

Thursday, 24 October 2024

0700 - Breakfast \$22

1230 - Depart hotel for Fess Parker Winery tour- bus, lunch, and wine tasting \$85 per person (limit 100)

1800 - Dinner at the hotel with pay as you go bar - \$48 per person.

Friday, 25 October 2024

0700 - Breakfast \$22

0815 - Depart hotel for Vandenberg tour- bus and lunch \$70

1630 - Return to hotel

1800 - Dinner at the hotel w/speaker and pay as you go bar - \$50 per person

Saturday, 26 October 2024

0700 – Breakfast \$22

0730 - 0830 - AAFM Board of Directors Meeting

0900 - General Membership Meeting

1200 - Lunch \$45

1800 – Hall of Fame AAFM Banquet w/ speaker - \$60 per person, choice of Steak, Chicken, or Vegetarian and pay as you go bar

Sunday, 27 October 2024

0700 - Breakfast \$22

NLT 1100 - Depart hotel

Taps for Missileers:

Capt Ricardo Benavides, served in Minuteman III operations at the 91 SMW and lived in Frisco, TX.

TSgt (ret) Stephen Cordray, an AAFM member, served in Minuteman I and III maintenance at the 90 SMW, and lived in Tulsa, OK.

General (ret) Howell Estes, an AAFM member, served as the AFSPC/CC and lived in Colorado Springs, CO.

Lt Col (ret) Royce Kjosa, an AAFM member, served in Minuteman I, II, and Titan II operations at the 44th, 351st and 381st Strategic Missile Wings, 4315 CCTS and 1 STRAD and lived in Lubbock, TX.

Col (ret) James M Labriola, an AAFM member, served in operations and maintenance in Thor, Titan II, and Minuteman II and III at the 10th, 390th, 394th, and 341st, HQ SAC, 1 STRAD, and DMSP and lived in Great Falls, MT.

Col (ret) Jack Leach, served in Minuteman and Titan operations and was the 308 SMW/CC, and lived in Peoria, AZ.

Lt Col (ret) Denny R Lyon, an AAFM member, served in operations and maintenance in MM II, III, and Peacekeeper at the 90 and 351 SMW and munitions maintenance in Hound Dog and SRAM in the 2 AMMS and 2 BW as well as HQ SAC and OO-ALC and lived in Layton, UT.

Col (ret) Randy Mason served in Titan II and GLCM operations, air staff, OSD and JCS arms control and lived in Cheyenne, WY.

Col (ret) Thomas S Pfeiffer, an AAFM life member, served in Minuteman II and Titan II operations at the 44th, 351st, and 381st SMW, 2 ACCS and HQ SAC, and lived in Kansas City, MO.

Capt James R Rogers, an AAFM member, served in Minuteman II operations at the 351 SMW and lived in Loudon, TN.

Brig Gen (ret) Teddy Rinebarger, an AAFM member, served in Minuteman I, II, and III at the 90, 321, 341, and 351 SMWs, in the 2 ACCS, Hq SAC, JCS, AU, and AFSPC and lived in Monument, CO.

Lt Col (ret) Harold Vice, an AAFM life member, served in MM III ops at the 90th Missile Wing and lived in Frankfort, IN.

CMSgt (ret) Jose Vizcaino, served in Minuteman maintenance at the 44 SMW and the 3901 SMES and lived in Madera, CA.

Lt Col (ret) James White, an AAFM member, served in MM II and III ops, Peacekeeper, GLCM, at the 321 SMW and 487 TMW, BMO, 1 STRAD, 394, AFOTEC and NSA, and lived in Las Vegas, NV.

New Members

We continue to welcome new members to our Association, as well as longtime members who decided to convert from annual memberships to lifetime memberships. New members can learn more about member benefits by visiting AAFM's website at www.afmissileers.org.

New Life Members since

December 2023:

Jennifer Bishop
Jim Lamont
Kevin Reigstad
William Taylor

Barry Ladehoff
Barth Lippert
Chris Richard

Upgraded to Life Membership since December 2023:

Robert Foster
Brock Lusk
Bill Wade

Chuck Futrell
Warren Renninger
Fred Wyant

New Annual Members since December 2023:

Joshua Bailey
Marland Chow
Phillip DePorto
Mark Halling
Paul Hunke
Lana Lesolean
Chuck McCarty
Jacob Neislen
Wayne Parkinson
Adam Rearick
Allen Sexton
Luke Stover
Cody Thompson
Gary Weaver

William Bond
Robert Cox
Stephen Gilliam
Paul Hallman
Al Kemmet
Joseph May
Kayla Melnychuk
Darrel Nesselth
Zachary Raak
Phillip Rietz
Troy Shafford
Dana Struckman
Ted Ungricht
Joel Wright

Registration Form – 2024 AAFM National Meeting

On line registration at AFMissileers.org or send this form with check to AAFM, 6128 Highwood Park Lane, Naples, FL 34110

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Number Attending _____

Spouse/Guest Name _____

Arrive _____ Depart _____

Special Requirements _____

(Enter names as preferred on name tags) _____

	Number	Amount
Registration fee-\$35 each	_____	_____
Late registration (16 Aug) \$40	_____	_____
Wednesday Reception- \$28 each	_____	_____
Thursday Breakfast \$22 each	_____	_____
Thursday Tour \$85 each	_____	_____
Thursday Dinner \$48 each	_____	_____
Friday Breakfast \$22 each	_____	_____
Friday Tour \$65 each	_____	_____
Friday Dinner \$50 each	_____	_____
Saturday Breakfast \$22 each	_____	_____
Saturday lunch \$45 each	_____	_____
Banquet \$60 each	_____	_____
Circle one per person: Steak Chicken Vegetarian		
Sunday Breakfast \$22 each	_____	_____

Total Amount _____

Vandenberg Base Tour info:

For DoD ID cardholders: Active/Retired Military or spouse with Mil ID card or CAC holders please provide full name (Last, First, MI) as it appears on your ID and type of card:

Member: _____ Active/Retired/CAC _____

Guest: _____ Active/Retired _____

For those without active/retired or CAC ID cards, Full Name (Last, First, MI), State Driver's License or passport number and last four digits of SSN:

Member: _____ DL/passport No: _____ DL State: _____ SSN Last four: _____

Guest: _____ DL/passport No: _____ DL State: _____ SSN Last four: _____

Association of Air Force Missileers

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Announcements

****308 Strategic Missile Wing Reunion - Tuscon, AZ - October 11-13, 2024****

****Association of Air Force Missileers 2024 National Meeting - Buellton, CA - October 23-27, 2024****

Visit the AAFM Missile Heritage Store online at <https://www.afmissileers.org>



Keep your mailing address, email address and dues current with AAFM. Email us at aafm@afmissileers.org, call 719-351-3962, or mail to AAFM, P.O. Box 1767, Monument, CO 80132

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