

Association of Air Force Missileers



"Victors in the Cold War"

The Cuban Missile Crisis

History

and the Way Ahead

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- 14 October, President Kennedy briefed and the ExComm formed
- ExComm discussed air attacks, an invasion and a blockade of Cuba

SAC in 1962

- SAC has 283,000 people
- 639 B-52s in 36 Wings
 - Up to 18 on Airborne Alert
- 547 Hound Dog Missiles



- 880 B-47 Stratojets
- 146 EB/RB-47s
- 19 Wings
- Aircraft deployed for Reflex Alert



- 79 B-58 Hustlers
- 2 Wings





- 503 KC-97 Stratotankers in 24 Squadrons



- 515 KC-135s in 33 Squadrons



- 42 U-2s In 1 Wing

1962 – Busy for Missileers

- New systems coming on line
- Thousands of missileers in training at Sheppard, Chanute and Vandenberg
- Operational units coping with complex, unreliable, dangerous liquid fueled systems

Matador and Mace

- Germany
- Taiwan
- Okinawa
- Korea
- Orlando
- Patrick
- Libya



BOMARC

Air Defense Missile

Nuclear or Conventional

Based in

Northeast and Northern US

Canada

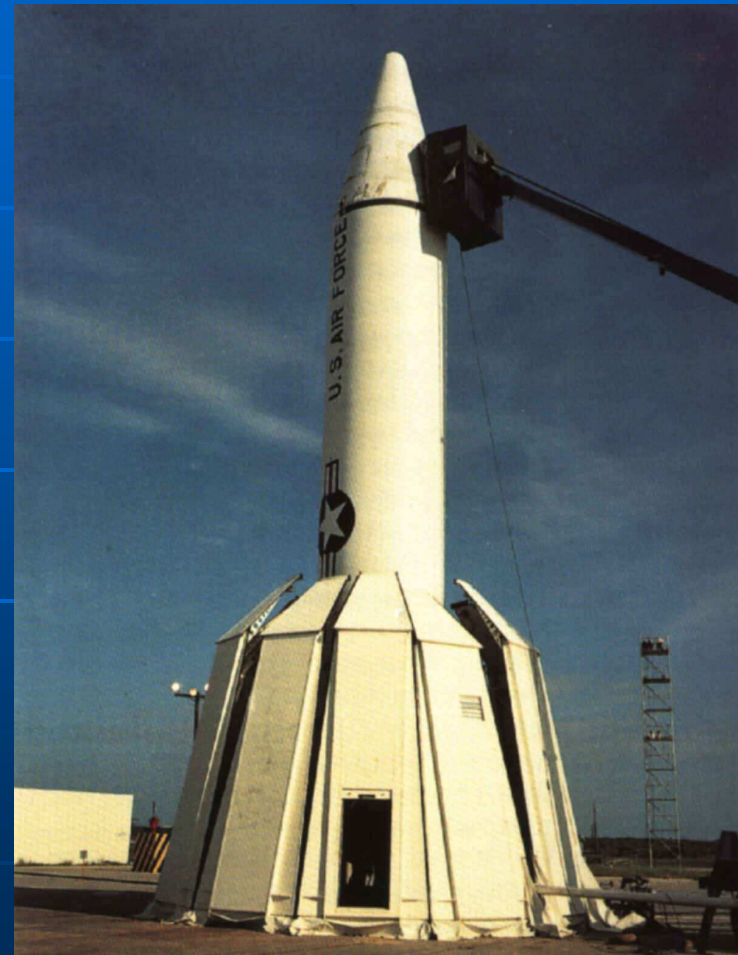
Eglin and Vandenberg



IRBMs – Thor and Jupiter

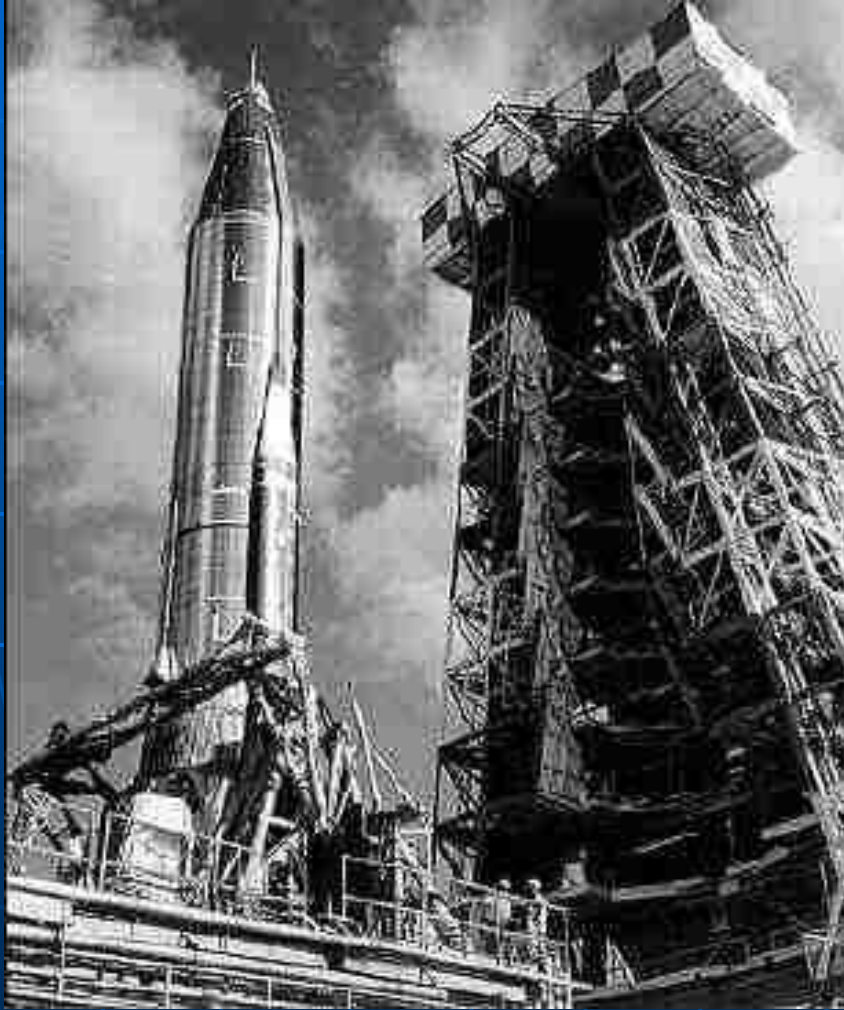


Thor in the UK



Jupiter in Italy and Turkey

Atlas D



Vandenberg

Warren

Offutt

Atlas E



Vandenberg

Warren

Forbes

Fairchild

Atlas F

- Vandenberg
- Altus
- Dyess
- Lincoln
- Plattsburgh
- Schilling
- Walker



Titan I

- Vandenberg
- Lowry
- Beale
- Larson
- Ellsworth
- Mountain Home



Saturday - 20 October 1962

- First covert notification
- Calls from SAC through the wing command posts
- “Bring everything on alert – and leave it there”
- Intel briefings finally on Sunday

Monday - 22 October 1962

- President Kennedy addresses Nation
- SAC and most of US military to Defcon 3
- US forces in Europe at higher alert but no Defcon change

- B-47s disperse to commercial airports and bases in US and overseas with nukes on board
- B-52 airborne alert increased to 65 aircraft in the air
- Recce flights to Cuba and Soviet Union increased

Alert at Hahn



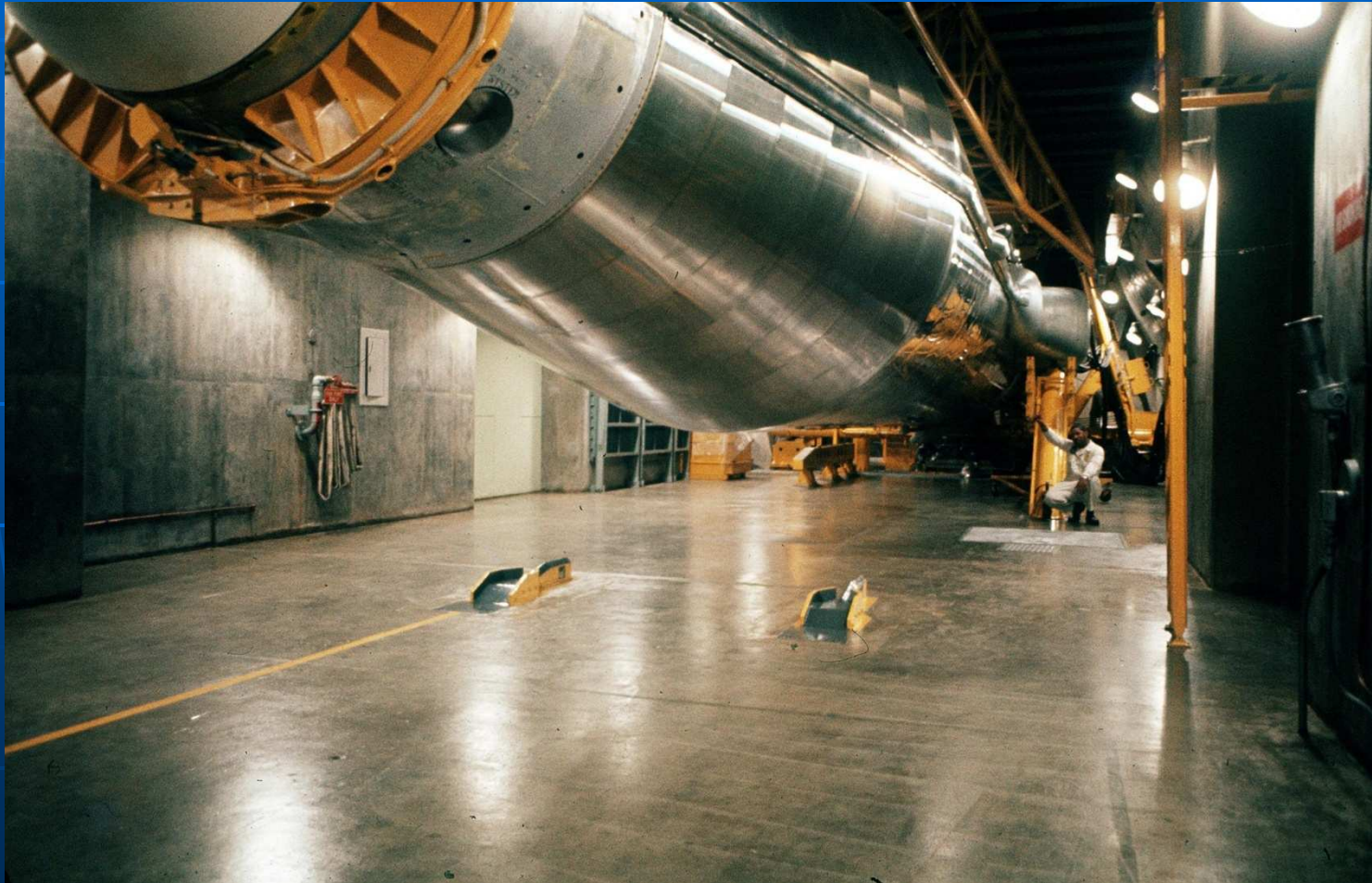
ICBMs

- One full crew always at the consoles
- Almost constant back to back alerts
- “Maximize alert and limit maintenance”

Titan I Crew



Atlas E on Alert



Minuteman

- Wing I – the 341st SMW, near Completion

Kennedy asks Lemay to get Missiles on Alert



Wednesday – 24 October

- SAC ordered to Defcon 2
- Notification by voice directly from Gen Thomas Power, the CinCSAC, instead of a coded message

Friday – 26 October

- A-06 attains alert, followed by the other nine missiles in the flight





The Crisis is Slowly Defused

- Extensive negotiations and discussions at many levels
- Many missteps along the way
- Soviets respond to the quarantine
- Kennedy and Krushchev agree on a solution

A Slow Return to Normal

- Force maintained at Defcon 2/3 until 20 November
- But We aren't released from 24 hour manning until the Monday following Thanksgiving, the following week.
- SAC now back to "normal."

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- Much more varied conventional force to respond
- Communications between leaders now direct and immediate

A Couple of Good Movies

- “A Gathering of Eagles” – 1963 film about a B-52/Titan I wing and the SAC ORI
- “Missiles of October” – 1974 TV drama with dialogue based on official documents from the Cuban Missile Crisis

