



TAC MISSILEERS

E-NEWSLETTER

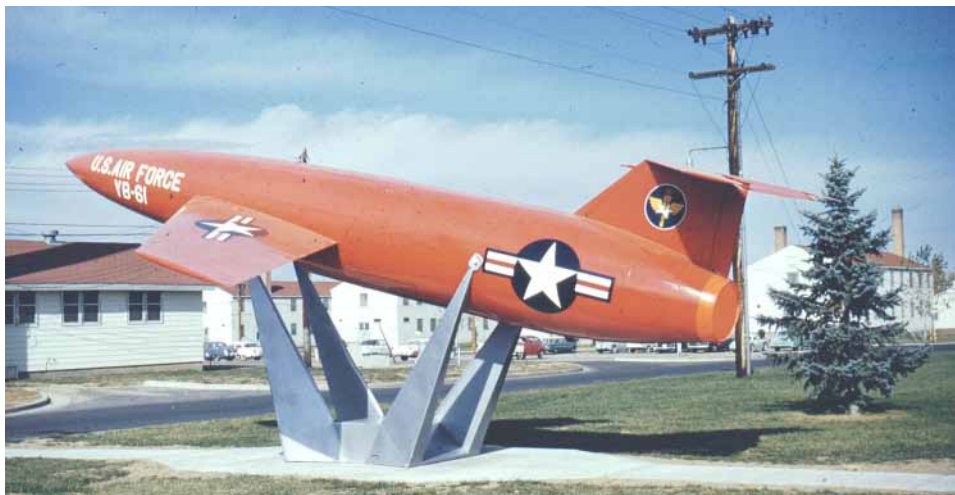
FALL 2005

“Serving the mace and matador missile crews and all support personnel who fought and won the cold war”

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The Air Force's first Pilotless Bomber Squadron

The December 1951 issue of **Flying** magazine published an un-cited article about the Tactical Air Force announcing the soon to be activated first Pilotless Bomber Squadron (Light) organized in October for test and training purposes equipped with the B-61 *Matador*. It was for then an exciting, quick look of one of the most closely-guarded high tech long-range military projects.



The craft selected for the Tactical Air Command's number 1 squadron of pilotless bombers was describe as a needle-nosed, swept wing missile the size of the F-80 jet fighter. Characteristic in profile to another Martin product the 3 engine XB-51 ground attack bomber. *The last sentence is spot on. Although the XB-51 was a much larger craft, the basic profile, empennage form and placement illustrated the*

strong family resemblance between the two Martin craft.

The developmental YB-61 *Matador* was designed as an all weather weapon needing a rocket motor for takeoff power and a jet engine for effective range. It was described as being filled with electronic equipment which permitted it to be guided to a target with comparatively good accuracy. *No details were given to say what that accuracy comparison was to.* Effective range was undisclosed but since the *Matador* was to be assigned to tactical units indicated that the range is somewhat limited. *The thinking of that time showed the uncertainty of what the guided missile really was, or how it would be deployed, for one statement referred to the Matador as an unconventional piece of artillery to fire against enemy ground instillations in support of advancing troops.* The cruising speed of the *Matador* was a secret but the hyped up report hinted that its cruising speed was 700m.p.h. *Quite a high speed for that time*

Under development since the late 40's, the first official flight of the XB-61 took place in January 1949, the missile had been flying at Holloman Air Force Base where the limited flight area force the missile to be flown on circles or figure eights. Only after the transfer of the missile to Cocoa, Florida under

control of the 6555th Guided Missile Wing was the bird, tracked by radar, able to be flown in a long range straight line down the Atlantic test range.

The Matador was not the “Fantastic” weapon for operational use as had been earlier leaked to the press; instead it was identified as an unconventional weapon for training purposes with no date set for transfer to TAC units in the field. The *Matador* was to be the forerunner of a whole new array of tactical and strategic weapons of tomorrow but, in its present state it was doubtful that it could carry an A bomb in its warhead.

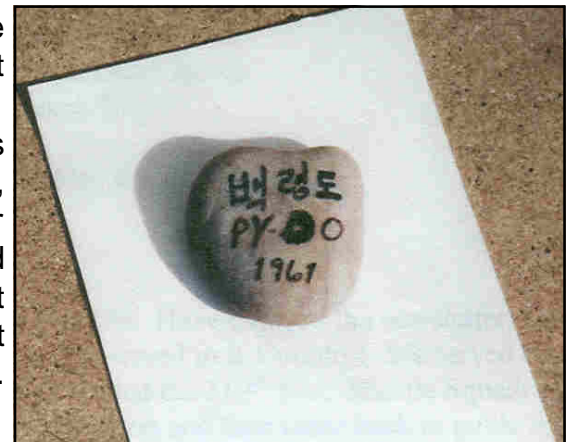
The Place, Korea; The Island, PY-Do

A UN-held island close by the west coast of North Korea



In a letter from from **Art Corcoran**, he briefly told of his Matador service in Korea with 58th TAC Missile Group, 310th TAC Missile Squadron and the 58th Communications and Guidance Squadron. Art mentioned strange rituals performed by the Missileers on the island of Paengnyong-do; commonly called "PY-Do" by the Wing-Nuts stationed there. The guidance technicians had two locations, one being this island located north of the 38th parallel on the western side of North Korea. PY-Do was accessible by Goony bird that could land on a rock hard sand beach when good weather and low tide coincided. Seems that the missile boys, being missile boys, developed some unusual attraction for the rocks

that grew there; for each of the Missileers would select a rock to call their own. Furthermore, select Launch Officers were furnished a rock by the inmates of the island, Art being one of the select few LOs so honored sent the picture of his rock, show below . Art only touched the surface of what must have been a secret rock society that flourished during the time of the Matador in Korea. Characters with names like “Master Rock” who was apparently the head rock and his XO “Ole Slick” were mentioned. There are many stories to be told, according to Art. He particularly would like learn the present location of the “chief rocks”. So, for all you PY-Do rock hounds out there, **Art has sent a challenge**; tell us the whereabouts of the chief rocks or any PY Do rock stories that you know of and we'll make sure your contribution is published. Art's letter about that Asian rock fetish reminds me of the tales told about the arctic radar Airmen stationed at Rockville AFS, Iceland in the 70s. There, I've heard, if you went to bed after having had too much to drink and had caused a particularly bad scene during the evening you just might wake up the next morning with a 200 pound boulder in bed with you. That boulder spent the night with many radar guys during its time. Were there any such amorous boulders at PY-Do?

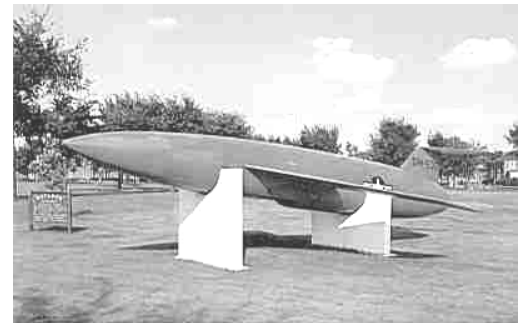


Missileers On The Mend

From our own Mr. President, **Julian Esposito**: I guess I 'll really be out of commission for the next few months, I had open heart bypass surgery on Wednesday Aug. 24th. I got home from St. Francis Hospital on Long Island on Monday, Aug.29th. On the 22nd, I finally stopped ignoring the back and arm pains I had been having and went to the cardiologist. He gave me a stress test and then sent me to the hospital for a catheterization which they did on Tuesday. That 's when then told me that I needed open heart bypass surgery Needless to say, I was shocked! I guess I shouldn 't have been with the history of heart problems in my family. Having the family nearby made everything easier. The hospital staff and the doctors were great and now I 'm home from work for an 8 or 9 week recovery. I 'll be watching my emails If any of you haven 't had a stress test in awhile, I recommend one! Keep in touch, **zito55@aol.com** Regards, Zito

Georgi Kovach has said that George had a stroke recently - he is very confident that he will be back home soon and back on the computer. She asked to please keep him in your prayers and send him a get well card. **George Kovach, 231 Penny Lane, Sterling, VA 20164**. Thanks, Georgi Kovach

I was stationed at Hahn 1965 - 1966 (closeout). I just ran across the picture below. It is of our crew, l to r, **A2c Gerald Lynn, A2c Lee Pritchett, 2Lt John (Jack) Coleman and Tsgt John L.D. Palko**. I believe this was taken at our combat crew graduation in the spring of 1965, at Orlando AB. **Jerry Lynn, SMSGT (Ret)**
Lynn_family@msn.com



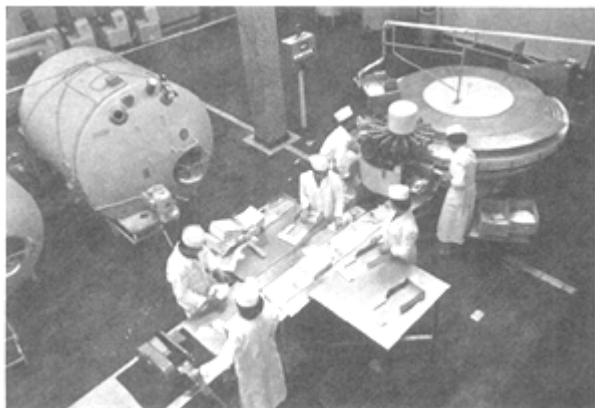
B-61 At Chanute AFB as a Gate Guard 1957



Tom Bowers sent in this nice shot of the Grünstadt Day Room taken during the pre-RFML period there.

This is the second in our **trial** editions of the Tac Missileers Electronic/Digital Newsletter. There are still bugs to be worked out. By its very nature folks on our regular mailing list without email addresses do not receive these test editions. I hope that by June of 2006 we will be able to reduce our major expense; that of mailing out the quarterly hard copy newsletter. When the time comes and we decide to pull that trigger we will of course only stop the hard copy to those of you who expressly ask us to do so. The E-Newsletter will often contain more information, pictures and articles than the regular newsletter.

Did'ja ever wonder where the dinning hall bread and pastries came from while you were that young missile man in Germany, or how about the ice cream in those half-pint boxes we got once in a while or the many photos and slides you had developed by the AAFES? Then take a look at these photos from the 50's. Some of Grünstadt's finest AAFES Depot workers performing those behind-the-scenes chores. The depot, still in action and now much bigger, still serves the U.S. military in Europe with a line of food and products suited to our cutting-edge military forces. The range of products now runs from hamburger patties all the way to bottled water. It's my hope that they don't source that water from the near-by *Hell Hole*.



Executive Director: Joe Perkins, perkster@fcol.com
3133 Ravines Rd, Middleburg, FL 32068 (904) 282-9064
President: Julian Esposito, zito55@aol.com
130 Balsam Lane, Levittown, NY 11756
Secretary: Larry Emerson, lemerson@swbell.net
114 Sunflower Dr. Wichita, KS 67217 (316) 524-7803
Membership Dir/Treasurer: Max Butler maxbutler11540@sbcglobal.net
3270 Bufkin Springfield Rd, Mt. Vernon, IN 47620 (812) 307-0187
Publisher: Curtis McKee, topmckee@juno.com
3702 Big Dalton Ave, Baldwin Park, CA 91706
Editor: Bob Bolton, rbolton@charter.net
2140 Sandown Court, Lawrenceville, GA 30043 (770) 339-6836
Historian: Art Gust, abgust@tyler.net or abgir37@yahoo.com
RR3 Box 400, Jacksonville, TX 75766 (903) 589-9701

