



# ***TAC MISSILEERS***

## **NEWSLETTER**

Volume 6, Number 1

"Serving the mace and matador missile crews and support personnel who fought and won the cold war"

Spring 2004

Visit Us On Line At <http://tacmissileers.homestead.com/MISSILEER.html>

### **And Speaking Of Our Web Site**

When was the last time you visited our Tac Missileers web site? Or would a better question be have you ever visited it? Joe has assembled a great collection of more than 20 different web pages submitted by Tac Missileer members. There are some very interesting and a varied collections of old photographs and personal remembrances submitted. Almost 57,000 hits have been registered by the site and the Guest Book contains nearly 500 entries from not only Missileers but from folks who have surfed into our site. Read through the Guest Book entries, you might find some of those missing crew mates you've wondered about. Joe updates the web site on a regular basis and puts items of special interest on the first page. He has recently started to include a copy of this newsletter just in case you don't get yours when you should.

### **NASHVILLE REUNION NOTE**

**Joe Perkins Said "Its Never Too Early To Get The Job Started"**

And with that statement the kickoff for our next reunion has begun. Joe and the rest of the crew have decided to peg the date for our Nashville, Tennessee reunion during the first week of June 2005.

Don't pack your bags just yet because as I write this there are still 16 months of planning ahead of us. We just wanted to give everybody an OFFICIAL heads up with plenty of lead time so that there are no feeble excuses like,

*"I didn't have enough time to plan for it"*

for not showing up for our next big event. Be sure to pencil-in the **first week of June 2005** in you planner right now to attend our Missileers Country and Western hoedown. Developing details will be published in the next editions of the Tac Missileers newsletter. Keep watch for them here and on the Tac Missileers web site!

## The Missileers Trip To Germany Still On

Joe Perkins has decided to push the trip date back just a bit and waiting a little longer to get you the best travel deal. He is now looking at August or September 2004 and is determined to get the best pricing available from the tourist agents he is dealing with. He is working hard on this project, so if you are interested please sign up and give him your support.

### Max's Viewpoints

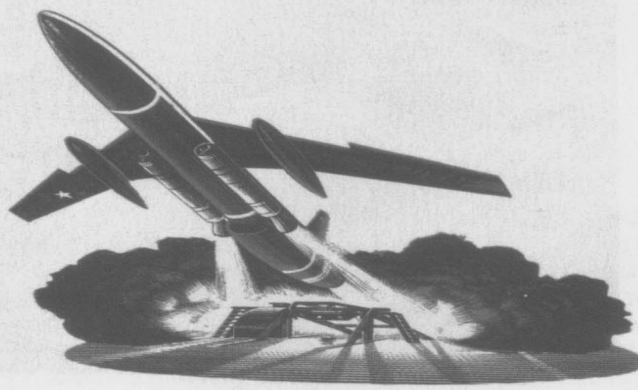
I think I have sent all paid up members their 2004 membership card. If you have paid up and haven't received your card, PLEASE contact me. We certainly appreciate everyone's efforts in sending in their 2004 dues, but there is still a large number of that are not paid up, over **100** in fact have not done so. If you aren't sure about your 2004 membership status, contact me and I will inform you. If you get an e-mail from me concerning dues, please don't take offense. It is just a necessary business procedure and a friendly reminder. Believe me, I know how easy it is to forget something you are supposed to do, only once a year. — I am waiting on the samples of our unit and group patches from the vendor. If the quality is acceptable, I will order any patches that you want. I have ordered the jackets that you have asked for, I should have them by the end of March. In case I don't have the patches at the same time, I may go ahead and send the jackets out and then the patches will follow after I get them. — If anyone has a new e-mail or snail mail address, don't forget to notify me of that change. — For the members at Denver that signed the oversize get well card to Edgar Stenerson, I received a very nice letter from his wife, conveying her and Edgar's heartfelt appreciation for the members thoughtfulness. — I hope everyone is already thinking about the Nashville 2005 reunion. I know it sounds like a long way off, but believe me, it will be here before you know it. We found out at Denver how quickly it can be time for the reunion, even though you think you have everything in order. We learned valuable lessons last year and things should go even smoother in Nashville. If you have a idea on how we can make the reunion more enjoyable for you or if there is something special you would like to experience at the reunion, please let us know. Now is the time to get your ideas to the staff, so that we can have the time to consider and work on your ideas and suggestions. — Regarding the models of the Matador and the Mace from Larry W. Johnson. I purchased the Matador from him at a model show in Evansville, IN. last year. It is well worth the price. Of course you will have to do your own painting and decals. But if asked, he may do it for you, at an increased price, of course. **Max**

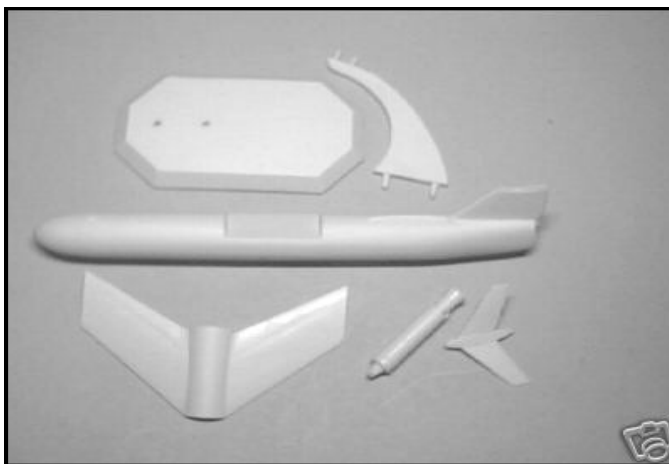
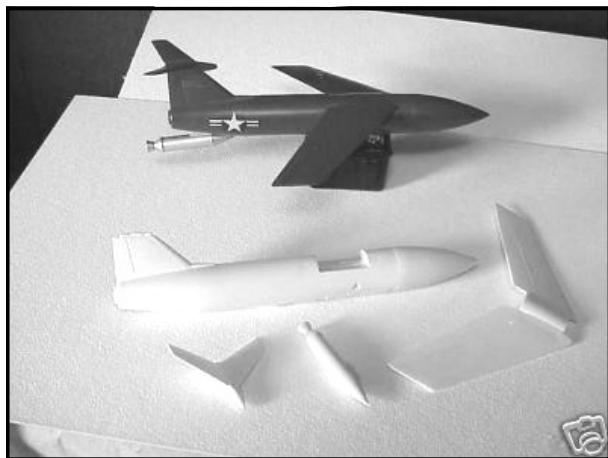
Coming In The  
**MAY**  
Issue Of

# AIRPOWER

On The News Stands in Early April

**WINGED MISSILES OF THE U. S. AIR FORCE** – Sitting on the brink of a nuclear Armageddon, the Air Force's Strategic Air Command held control of unmanned bombers as well as the famous B-47s and B-52s of the Cold War era. For the first time ever, we explore the Mace, Matador, Snark, Bomarc, and X-10/Navaho missile programs!





**Larry Johnson** has his rendition of the **Mace TM-76** in production and it is ready to be ordered. Rendered in resin this 1/48 model scales out to a near perfect 5 1/2" wing span and 11" in length. This is the ideal mate to his already available 1/48 scale Matador. **Larry's address was cut off by the printer in the last issue so I am rerunning this article again.**

*The only \*new\* Mace and Matadors models available anywhere and at reasonable prices!*

**Larry W. Johnson**  
**720 Rummage Road**  
**Coxs Creek, KY 40013**  
**USA (502) 543-9282**

A Missileers German wife who shall remain nameless shares this. She was very new to the States in 1967 and on her first Stateside assignment with her new Ami husband at Mill Valley Air Force Station, CA. Their support base was the nearby small but beautiful mission style Hamilton AFB. With her spoken English just coming up to speed but still lacking the subtle nuances of the language she had just started working her first U.S. job in a medical office in San Rafael. It so happened that two other AF wives also worked there. One day the other two were discussing the limited parking at BX on base and how hard it was to find parking. Well the newbie said that she hardly ever had a problem getting a spot right in front of the main door. She told them that there were always four parking spots most always open, three of them she didn't use because one was for the Air Police and two were for officers but the one she found almost always found open was for "**General**" parking and she use that one every time she went shopping. I wonder if that is why her hubby was soon shipped off to a well know hot spot in SEA.

**Tac Missileers Corporation** is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under section 501 ( c ) 19 of the IRS code. The **Tac Missileer Newsletter** is published 4 times a year, special editions as necessary. Membership dues are \$15 per year to run from January through December. Notifications relating to dues will not be mailed to individual members. Announcements in the **Tac Missileer Newsletter** will be the only notice given.

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### My story

#### **BY Michael Sweeney ( Winner of a free years membership )**

I joined the Air Force April 1955. The one thing I remember about that event was that the recruiter asked what I wanted to do. I told him that I was trained in TV repair and I wanted to be in electronics. He pulled out a sheet and said that it might interest me. It was a job description of a Electronic repairman for a guided missile. Neither of us had ever heard of a guided missile. We read up on the subject and that's what excited me to the point I joined right there. That was the beginning of what I consider a very exciting career.

I went on to Denver Colorado for Tech. school to train as a Missile Guidance Technician and then to Orlando AFB. I was assigned to the Missile Maintenance Area as an instructor. There was a big influx of people from other career fields coming in so we had lot of training to do. For someone with interest in electronics, as I was, it was a dream job.

I was transferred to Bitburg in 1957 and again assigned to the maintenance area. I can honestly say that I have never met a better bunch of guys in my life, either before or after Bitburg. Germany was a big shock to me. I had never been out of Texas and to be dumped off in some strange house overnight until I could get transportation to Bitburg, put me in complete shock. When I arrived in at Bitburg AFB, 1st Tactical Missile Sq., I was roomed with an airman, whose name I would also like remember. It had been a long day and I hit the sack. Well, my rest ended a short time later with knocks on the door every few minutes. It had turned out that this room mate lent money \$5.00 for \$6.00, sold black market cigarettes and some kind of deal with the local bars to exchange script for dollars. He turned out to be a very good friend.

My wife had said that she was coming to Bitburg. After looking around a bit I made a bad move. I went to the Commander and asked him to write a letter to her stating that conditions were not good there and recommend that she stay home. Well, a short time later the Commander called me in and had me stand at attention and read her reply. She had sent a two page type written letter, raking him over the coals. She was coming over, no matter what. He broke into laughter a little later and I escaped with no damage. Betty and our baby, Karen, came over in a few months later and I can say that she made a much better decision than I could have. The exchange rate was 4 marks to 1 dollar. We had a nice apartment above a bakery at 52 Trier Str. in the heart of Bitburg. It was the only place with hot running water. The only restriction was that they took baths on Saturday and they had first use. It was small but we got by. Life was good there. We worked hard and played hard. We traveled every chance we got. We saw the Worlds Fair in Amsterdam, stayed in Paris a few days, and traveled the country side every chance we got.

I was selected to go to Tripoli and what a blast that was. I had the job of maintaining our guidance system on a RB66 aircraft. It would fly down range before every launch. After the plane left I would either head for the beach or watch a missile launch. I was there when the bird burned up on the launch pad. Somebody got something tied around the rocket and pulled it away. Good thing, that would have been a mess if that thing had gone off. Again we traveled. We went into Tripoli and visited some Roman ruins outside of Tripoli. I have pictures of all that stuff. When I left for Tripoli I had left my car by our Post Office. My wife did not drive so I told my one time roommate buddy that he could use the car. Big mistake, I forgot to tell my wife. Well, she went by to check mail and saw that the car was missing and called the Air Police. My buddy was stopped when entering the base and put in jail. It took a while for him to convince the police that he had permission and to call my wife. She was called and all ended well. The car was a Mercedes, about 1950 with rolled fenders. Never had one problem as long as we were over there.

That is some of my experiences in Bitburg. I was assigned back to Orlando for the Mace and on to Okinawa. Later I cross trained into Computers and worked at NORAD. I retired in 1975. It was a good life.

These great shots are from Mike Sweeney, see *his story on page 4*. Taken on deployment to Tripoli in 1958. The photos were received in full color and I wish we could have printed them that way because they are some of the finest of the old bird I have ever seen. He mentioned the malfunctioned bird in his story. Also see Mike and Missileer friends in picture on page 6.





Mike Sweeney and unnamed friends... If can you ID the unknown missileers, let us.

### Attention Grünstadt Gang

And Sembach buddies! Do the names of Kerzenheim, Eisenberg, Ebertsheim, Gollheim, Tiefenthal, Rosenthal, Neuleiningen, Grünstadt, Sausenheim, Altleiningen or Kleinkarlbach bring a tear to the eye or perhaps a spike of cold fear right through the heart. If so, you might be interested in a great web site I just found. Stuffed with dozens of recent aerial photos of these villages and 18 more from around the best Mace missile site that ever was.

Surf to:

<http://www.pfalz-luftbilder.de/seite2.htm>

and then click on any of the villages signs to see many detailed views of each of them. If you surf to:

[http://www.pfalz-luftbilder.de/IMG\\_1138.JPG](http://www.pfalz-luftbilder.de/IMG_1138.JPG) you will see an excellent shot of the old 887th launch complex with Grünstadt in the background.

Photos are all less than 1 year old taken by a German pilot from his powered paraglider. He uses the model airplane field just outside the old 887th main gate as his takeoff spot to get many of these fine shots.

For those that haven't been back in a while these photos will enable you to see how much has and hasn't changed in 37 years or more  
ED.

### TAPS FOR MISSILEERS

**Bernard T. "Bernie" Kirkpatrick**, Died Jan. 12, 2004. Bernie was in the 69th PBS at Patrick.

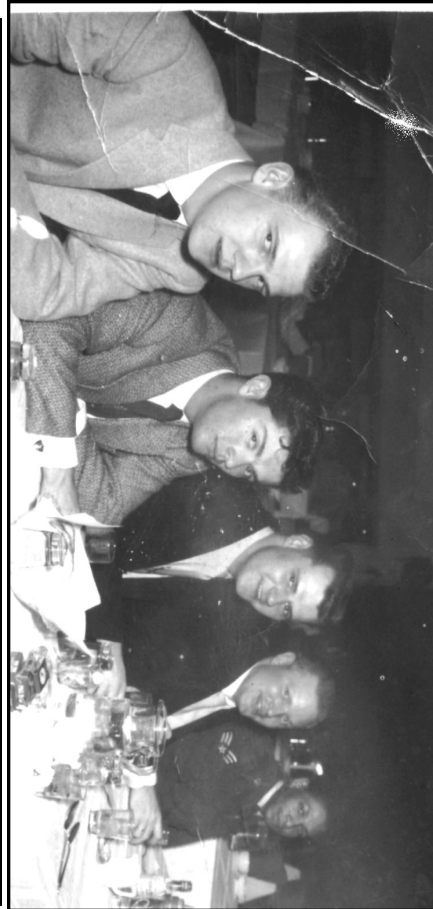
**Bill Lewis** passed away last July.

**Charles A. Baker** passed away Jan. 13, 2004. He was with the Mace at Sembach.

**Abe J. Kelly** passed away the last of February 2004. A Mace B CCC at Bitburg and maintenance at Kadena.

WELCOME NEW TAC MISSILEERS MEMBERS  
**Edgar A. Ashberry — Carl Alvers**  
**Ronald W. Baertsch**

Hello Everyone,  
I've been looking for Jerry English for years, He is the one 2nd from the left, black hair. Last I heard, he may be living in the LA area. He was a heck of a dirt bike rider at Hahn 59-60. I can't remember the other guys name's. Might be someone out there that will recognize themselves. Let me know if your can ID the others and if you know where Jerry is.  
Thanks.  
Max Butler



## Here is some PACAF stuff for a change

By **Jim Eagle** ( *Winner Of a Free Years Membership* )

I was at Kadena in the 498th, and pulled duty as Missile Launch Officer for about 20 months, 1962-1964. The 498th had FOUR missile sites, and they never, to my knowledge (memory) went by any kind of call sign. However, my primary site was Site III, and it was located well north of the 3rd Marines Division, Camp Hansen, and the furthestest site from Kadena. We calculated that during a 30 month tour, the launch crews would have spent about 34 days on an Air Force Blue Bus.

Each of the sites was, as you know, underground, and site I and II had diesel engines in both missile complexes, while site III and IV had three diesel generators in only the B complex. All sites were equipped with eight missile bays, split into two complexes, A and B, with A being the complex on the right facing outward in a bay. We were equipped entirely with the MACE B, inertial guidance, J33 engine, spoilers instead of ailerons, no rudder, and Thiokol 100K+ booster. Design by American engineers and construction by Okinawan firms led to many interesting developments when the sites were first opened. It took three catastrophic failures of the door actuating hydraulic systems and three complete re-designs before we finally got it workable at site III. One of the failures resulted in the dumping of about 300 gallons of Mil Spec 5606 hydraulic fluid in the sumps of site III, making for an interesting fire control scenario. At one time the group commander was caught in a live bay with a Mech 5 for about 4 hours, when the door interlock system got stuck. (We never did explain to PACAF why that bird was taken off alert for so long without a maintenance reason). Given the temperature in the bays, this was a hot time in the old town for the old man, and the only time anyone ever saw him without his coat and tie.

Each crew consisted of a launch officer, an NCOIC/missile guidance systems technician, Mech 1 guidance system specialist, Mech 3 A&E mechanic, Mech 4 power production specialist, and Mech 5 Nuke and ordnance specialist. We consumed massive amounts of peanut butter, toast, coffee and after they got the system working, some fairly decent and some really awful frozen TV dinners. Having a broken microwave oven and nothing in the freezer but TV dinners was a fairly frequent situation, thus we always sweet talked the mess hall into providing bread and peanut butter.

The below ground toilet facilities consisted of the traditional honey bucket used on older aircraft, with the exception that there were NO working relief tubes. The "first user" emptied, so a fair amount of time was spent making the trip to the outdoors to relieve bladder systems. This system also resulted in some record times during shift change procedures. Nothing could be worse than to be on the crew about to be relieved, with a very full bladder, and have the incoming crew forget--or screw up--the entry code for the double entry doors. Security alerts always took at least 30 minutes to clear, and when the security police and dogs were nervous, this could be a tense time. Positive control was in full force and no one to my knowledge ever made any practical jokes with that system. We also enforced the two man concept with absolute consistency and integrity.

Most of the launch officers were rated officers in the beginning, but we all spent six months at Lowry and six months at Orlando in the training pipeline. During the Cuban missile crisis we were required to continuously monitor the TRC-75 ("track 75") radio, and the 400 cycle noise of that system echoes in my ears to this day. It was located just at the launch officer's ear level, when seated at the launch console.

Power system hiccups were the order of the day, for the total system had been designed such that one diesel was inadequate to bear the normal load, while two diesels would attempt to grab

**Continued On Last Page**

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## Jim Eagle's Story

Continued From Page 7

the loads from each other and then one would overload, shut down, and then the second would hiccough and die. We learned to turn on everything to make the load enough, or turn OFF everything to make one unit bear the total load. We also learned how to count down four missiles in a hurry. Power failures got attention all the way to SAC headquarters, and so, to this day, anyone who worked in those sites flinches mightily when the lights flicker.

There were two launch squadrons, 873 TMS and 874 TMS, the 498 MMS, and group headquarters. Zabreski was the commander of the 18th Tac Fighter Wing and the Kadena clubs on Saturday nights were pretty lively, as was Koza city. When we pulled the midnight shift on the week end we always assigned one crew member to assist the bus driver with scanning the road for drunk Okinawans laying in the road. We also equipped the launch officers with 45s to make sure we could get past camp Hansen. I've seen one of my colleagues draw the weapon to get marines off the bus. Go figure.

Given the number of guys who pulled this tour, at all times at least 250 people in the launch crew category, it is very surprising to me that more of them don't show up in the Missileer News. The underground system made for fabulous war stories, of which I have more than a few.