



Volume 13, Number 3

TAC MISSILEERS

NEWSLETTER

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



Fall 2011

Keep in touch with the Organization and stay on top of the latest goings-on by visiting your web site often at www.TacMissileers.org.

Our 2011 San Diego Reunion, was held October 12th, 13th and 14th and acknowledged as being another successful one by those TAC Missileers who attended. In all 118 Missileers and 91 guest enjoyed the three day event. Wednesday the 12th was dedicated to getting settled in, registration and reconnecting with old friends. Later in the afternoon all enjoyed a couple of Happy Hours with light snacks make available by the hotel. Thursday the 13th was spent going on the various optional tours. Whether doing the 6 hour San Diego City and Harbor Tour, climbing the many steep ladders between decks on the 5 hour Midway Tour or interacting with the animals on the 7 hour tour to the world famous San Diego Zoo, everyone enjoyed their choice of sightseeing.

The TAC Missileers Business Meeting was held Thursday evening.

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Meeting Minutes:

TAC Missileers Reunion San Diego, CA – October 13, 2011 1700 Hours

The 2011 business meeting was called to order by **Bill Simpson**, President, at 1700 hours, after the conclusion of a short ‘walk-in’ video, prepared by **George Mindling**. The video included a ‘roll call’ of the various USAF units that were involved with the Matador and Mace missile programs. (The video has since been placed on the website so that it can be shared with everyone. Thanks George!) There were more than 100 TAC Missileers in attendance.

Bill led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a minute of silent prayer. He then welcomed attendees and introduced the TAC

Missileers officers, starting with **Max Butler** (Treasurer & Membership Director), **Russ Reston** (Secretary & Webmaster), **Bob Bolton** (Newsletter Editor) and **Art Gust** (Historian). (Unfortunately, Art was unable to attend.) Bill next introduced **Joe Perkins**, TAC Missileers Executive Director. Joe welcomed attendees to San Diego and promised an enjoyable reunion. He then thanked the officers for their support and presented each with a plaque recognizing his efforts. (Thanks, Joe!)

Russ Reston, Secretary, read the minutes from the 2009 Reunion in Dayton. They were accepted as read. Russ gave a quick status of the website and the change to electronic newsletter distribution. Electronic distribution has significantly reduced expenses allowing dues to remain unchanged as inflation persists. Russ recommended that portions of the website (e.g., newsletters / website subscriptions) be restricted to active members only. Since the newsletters are currently available to anyone via the website, there is less incentive to become an active member. Russ made a formal motion to implement a ‘common password’ to limit newsletter and website subscription access. The motion was approved. (This website modification should be complete no later than Nov. 11th, 2011.) **Max Butler**, Treasurer, gave a brief financial synopsis. At the beginning of September, the treasury had risen to \$45,142.61, with the influx of reunion registration fees. After payment of reunion expenses (e.g., tour / coach transportation fees and Oktoberfest costs), the treasury will return to its ‘normal’ level of approximately \$25,000. Max advised that this is a good ‘target’ to maintain the organization’s tax-free status and minimize IRS

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reporting requirements.

Max stated that a request had been received from TAC Missileer **Frank Roales**, on behalf of the Indiana Military Museum, asking for a donation to assist with the paint / decal costs necessary for restoration of the 'Wildwood' Mace. **Jerry Brenner** provided the current status of the restoration and answered questions. (It was Jerry who had contacted the **Indiana National Guard** about moving the missile from Wildwood, Fl. to Vincennes, IN. They moved the missile as part of a 'training' exercise, saving TAC Missileers the transportation costs.) A motion was made to give a donation of up to \$1,000 to cover the paint / decal costs. The motion was unanimously approved.

Max next expressed a special thanks to Russ for all his help since becoming Secretary in 2009 (e.g., assistance with the reunion planning, membership records, etc.).

Bob Bolton (Newsletter Editor) reminded attendees that he is always looking for items of interest for inclusion in the newsletter. Input is much appreciated. While photos may be better suited for the website, text / stories make the newsletters interesting and informative. Please send Bob your input.

Bill Simpson advised that there was no 'old business' and opened the floor to 'new business.'

David Coddington recommended that the organization consider placement of a TAC Missileers memorial plaque on Mt. Soledad (San Diego, CA). The Officers will take the recommendation under advisement.

Kenneth Roth stated that the Midway Tour did not provide sufficient time to fully see the USS Midway.

Joe Perkins asked for new officer nominations. None were received. The existing officers expressed their willingness to continue in their current positions. A motion was made and approved for their reelection.

Joe opened the floor for discussion on where the 2013 Reunion should take place. Recommendations included Washington DC, Branson, San Antonio, Orlando, Las Vegas, New Orleans and

Albuquerque. **San Antonio received 52 votes**, followed by Branson (13), Albuquerque (9), Washington (7), New Orleans (3), Las Vegas (1) and Orlando (0). **The 2013 Reunion will be held in San Antonio.**

At the meeting's conclusion, door prizes were awarded using numbered ticket stubs. The prizes consisted of various TAC Missileers memorabilia – a plaque, clocks, coffee mugs, t-shirts, license plates, challenge coins, etc. There was a minor 'glitch' calling the numbers, but all prizes were eventually distributed.

The meeting and door prize distribution were complete by 18:25 hours.

Respectfully submitted, **Russ Reston**
TAC Missileers Secretary

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Friday the 14th was a free, do-it-yourself, day with many of our folks enjoying visits to the City and its many interesting venues such as Old Town, Little Italy, the Gas lamp Quarter, Seaport Village and the many museums in Balboa Park. Friday night was the Jewel in the Crown, so to speak, of this reunion, a 5 hour Oktoberfest hosted by the German American Societies of San Diego. An evening of authentic German food, beer, wine and liquors. As you would expect we also had German music provided by talented musicians dress in traditional Bavarian outfits. The music stirred many Missileers to get up and dance as well as to participate in several contests of strength, coordination and good-natured foolishness. What a sight it was, nearly 200 Victors of the Cold War flapping their elbows and shaking their booty to Oom-pah music while doing the Chicken Dance! It was a great way to finish off this successful reunion.

We look forward to the 2013 reunion to be held in **San Antonio** and the Board Members will keep the you informed and up to speed as planning get underway some time next year. Till then, keep on keeping on Missileers!

Bob Bolton

TACMISSILEER CORP FINANCIAL REPORT

3/28/11-10/25/11

BALANCE on 3/28/11-----	\$25,935.63
MEMBER REUNION REGISTRATION FEE'S TAKEN IN-----	\$17,380.00
DUE'S TAKEN IN-----	\$3,589.00
SALES: Jackets, Patches, Hats etc.-----	\$909.61
TOTAL BALANCE as of 10/25/11-----	\$47,814.24
EXPENSES:	
SW GRAFIX-----	\$264.42
POSTAGE-----	\$343.95
NEWSLETTER PRINTING-----	\$660.68
OFFICE SUPPLIES-----	\$76.85
WEB-SITE FEE-----	\$250.20
RUSS RESTON REIMBURSEMENT---	\$112.00
JERRY BRENNER-----	\$119.03
MAX BUTLER TAC MISSILEER PATCHES---	\$300.00
REUNION GIFTS-----	\$1,467.49
TOURS & BUSSES-----	\$9,034.00
OCT FEST-----	\$6,804.00
HOLIDAY INN (VIDEO EQUIPMENT)-----	\$229.95
REUNION FEES REIMBURSED (MEDICAL)---	\$697.00
EXPENSE TOTAL-----	\$20,359.57
BALANCE -----	\$47,814.24
LESS EXPENSE-----	\$20,359.57
BALANCE on 10/25/11-----	\$27,454.67

"In Dreams" – A novel by Gary Sand

Former TAC Missileers Newsletter Editor **Gary Sand** has recently released a novel titled *In Dreams*. 325 pages (paperback) Cover art by: Richard Stroud

Gary summarizes his novel as follows:

There is no shortage of books written about fighter pilots, and even a few about SAC bombers and missiles, but as far as I know, former launch officer Carlo Croce's novel, *Launch Enable*, a cold war thriller about the Mace B, is the only novel written about our old Martin-made birds. Not many people are even aware that Air Force tactical missiles were part of the nuclear triad in the 1960s. We know because we lived it, and as someone who was there, it only seemed natural to incorporate parts of my missile experiences into the plot of my first novel. My cold war time in the Air Force will never be forgotten, and for that I'm thankful as I would never want to forget anything about it, especially the people with whom I served. So many of them left an indelible impression on my life and as a result my fictional characters acquired bits and pieces of their personalities from those real people.

In Dreams touches only lightly on the subject of the TAC missileers and their mission, but the main characters early Air Force experiences mirror our own as he is assigned to Lowry and Orlando, and finally to an operational missile site in Germany. His Air Force time sets the scene, but the story is about a young airman and a young woman, that begins on a summer day in Denver in 1959 and takes up again forty-seven years later when the retired NCO returns to Denver to find her. It's also a story about a classic car and the role it plays in his hopes to renew a relationship with his former fiancé.

In a world so filled with inexplicable violence, anger, mistrust, and fear of the known and the unknown, I felt compelled to write a story that would recall life in the fifties and early sixties, and how the passage of time has affected and changed those of us who were young then. Should you choose to read it, I hope it will evoke as many memories for you, as writing it did for me.

If anyone is interested, the book is available at Amazon.com in both Kindle and paperback versions. Copies are also available at the publisher's website in all downloadable formats and in paperback. The print version is less expensive from the publisher: <http://www.wingspress.com/>

Charlie Smoote's Formosa Live Missile Launch

I've been thinking about publishing this story, but it's been a long time. It is, however, another tidbit of Matador history. First, our Launch Team A was comprised of Captain **Roth** LO, SSGT **William (Bill) Newton**, Crew Chief; the two Guidance Mechanics were A1C **Calvin L Miller** and A2C **Stephens**; Controls System Mechanic was A1C **Charlie Smoote**; the Engine Mechanic was A1C **Fred Beltzer**; the Nuclear Specialist was A1C **'Rookie' Steltz**; the Armament Mechanic was A1C **Kaser** and the 60KW Operator was A2C **Clarke**.

To get one up to this point; a little history: We built "blockhouses" dug out of the revetment walls and lined with PSP, plywood and other assorted materials from various sources. Some were pretty elaborate, depending on the architectural and mechanical skills associated with the launch crews. We lived in tents across the taxiway when on launch duty but had barracks on the main base. Someone had decided that our blockhouses were inadequate and decided to build some from reinforced concrete. Thus, they brought in some long, blue trailers for us to use as blockhouses until the reinforced concrete state-of-the-art ones were completed.

It was decided to conduct a live launch of a missile in Formosa (Taiwan), so we got a brand new missile from "somewhere" and proceeded to prepare it for launch. First, they brought in their "elite" crew to fire it, so we were relegated to the adjacent revetment to act as "backup." The dignitaries, tech reps and assorted personnel, plus a launch crew, were all crowded into that trailer while our trailer blockhouse contained our launch crew only.

We checked out our missile on the pad, hooked everything up and prepared to standby for backup. The chase plane, an F-100, was bearing down, MSQ had locked on. We ran our missile up to 100% throttle and waited. Guess what? The primary missile didn't fire and it was up to us to provide the launch. Captain **Roth** queried the MOC several times; "Are you sure?" Having been reassured that it was "OK," Captain **Roth** pushed the buttons. Off into the air went our missile, headed for the South China Sea. However, all was not well. The chase plane was going the wrong way so it had to play "catch up," which was futile. The MSQ operators were taking a smoke break and everyone was surprised except us. The MSQ guys tried turns which didn't work. So, they added more turns; still the missile didn't turn. Then the missile went off RADAR. The F-100 pilot searched the area to see if there was any sign of a missile impact, without success.

They had accident investigation board from 13th Air Force on station to interrogate us to ascertain what could have possibly happened to our errant missile. I put on my fresh starched khaki uniform and proceeded to meet the board. At first; I disavowed any knowledge or thoughts regarding this incident and was dismissed. Then, Major **Murphy** of Orlando fame told the board that he "knew me" and that I wasn't telling all that I knew (or thought). He reassured me that I wasn't going to jail or anything; they just wanted to find what could have happened. So, I went back before the board. I made it clear that my theory, based on the available information, was that, the Arm Monitor Safe Circuit, which was designed to blow off a wing when the missile exceeded several degrees off course for a given time, had worked as advertised. They excused me, and later used my theory to explain what had happened to the airborne missile. The wing had blown off and the missile had fallen into the South China Sea.

The primary missile (with the crowded trailer "blockhouse")? It was discovered that a wire was inadvertently twisted and broken when installing the igniter into the RATO bottle. So much for the first (and last) live missile launch from the "island paradise" of Formosa (Taiwan).

Charlie Smoote

Controls System Mechanic
Launch Team A
Formosa, Taiwan

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