

MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE, 564TH MISSILE SQUADRON,
ROMEO MISSILE ALERT FACILITY
Approximately 4 miles north of State Highway 365 and 16.6 miles east
of I-15
Brady vicinity
Pondera County
Montana

HAER MT-138-C
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
INTERMOUNTAIN REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Denver, CO 80228

**HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE, 564th MISSILE SQUADRON,
ROMEO MISSILE ALERT FACILITY**

HAER No. MT-138-C

Location: Approximately 4 miles north of State Highway 365 and 16.6 miles east of Brady and Interstate 15 in the SW ¼ of Section 14, Township 27 North, Range 1 East, Pondera County, Montana

UTM: Zone 12 / 457052 Easting / 5327014 Northing

Date of Construction: Constructed as a Minuteman II system in 1965-1966; converted to a Minuteman III system in 1975; modified 1990

Designer: Ralph M. Parsons Company, Los Angeles, California

Builder: Morrison Knudsen Company and Associates

Present Owner: U.S. Air Force, Malmstrom Air Force Base

Present Use: Deactivated Missile Alert Facility, 564th Missile Squadron, 341st Missile Wing

Significance: The Romeo Missile Alert Facility is one of five MAFs associated with the 564th, an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) squadron based at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana. An MAF houses the personnel and equipment required to remotely monitor, control and command operations of a group of 10 Minuteman missiles. Each missile is deployed in its own unmanned below-ground silo known as a Launch Facility (LF). An MAF's ten missiles surround its with each LF located at least 3 miles from the MAF.

The Romeo and the 564th Missile Squadron's (MS) four other MAFs were determined representative examples of the infrastructure and unique technological system developed in response to the nation's Cold War defense and strategic deterrence needs. As such, they are historically significant for their association with the late twentieth-century defense policy of the United States. Military leaders found the rural Montana countryside surrounding Malmstrom Air Force ideally suited the needs of the Minuteman program, being situated within striking range of the Soviet Union. Of greater importance was the region's low population density which meant comparatively minimal loss of life in the event of nuclear attack.

Additionally, the Romeo and the 564th MS's four other MAFs embody some key aspects defining the Minuteman's technological superiority over its ICBM predecessors. Among the most significant of those was the consolidation of monitoring, control and command operations for a group of 10 missiles at a single central command facility. A two-person crew sat locked on constant 24-7 duty in the MAF's small and cramped underground portion which contained the controls and equipped for initiating missile launch. On Presidential command, each of the two crew members inserted a launch key which signaled crews at other MAFs to insert their launch keys. Actual missile launch could occur within less than one minute.

The Romeo and 564th MS's four other MAFs are also significant as representations of the architectural evolution of the MAF. Although of blast-resistant hard construction, the underground control and command portion of the Minuteman I MAF was still highly-vulnerable to the severe ground tremors associated with the spread of nuclear radiation, while life support facilities were concentrated in the soft or non-blast resistant portion of the structure only. Minuteman II designers addressed the need for better survivability of personnel and equipment by upgrading the MAF's hard underground portion with life support facilities as well as shock absorbing devices to maintain the structure steady if hit by nuclear tremors. The new MAF was expected to sustain a livable environment for two weeks after attack. Conversion of a Minuteman II MAF to a Minuteman III retained these improvements.

The Romeo MAF differs from the other four MAFs within the 564th in that the original above ground portion of the MAF was completely rebuilt in 1990. The renovation was based on the original floor plan, so Romeo MAF retains the same exterior and interior features as the other four MAFs associated with the 564th MS. Two primary differences between the Romeo MAF and the four other MAFs can be seen on the exterior of the building: the Romeo MAF has a standing seam metal roof instead of a roof covered with asphalt shingles and the color of the yellow siding has no variations in the color. Renovation of all of the MAFs associated with 341st MW occurred shortly after 2000, and renovations at the Romeo MAF were completed in 2003.

The interior of the Romeo MAF is structurally like the four other MAFs associated with the 564th MS. The layout and room functions are the same and include the entry vestibule, Flight Security Control Center, the recreational area, kitchen/dining area, and bedrooms. Its distinguishing features are its aesthetic qualities found in the recreation room above ground in the Launch Control Support Building (LCSB) and below ground in the Launch Control Center (LCC). These aesthetic features indicate not only a decorative theme that identifies Romeo MAF from the other four 564th MS MAFs, but also the recreational and domestic function of the LCSB and the military and missile function of the LCC. Visitors to the Romeo MAF are immediately greeted in the entrance vestibule with its mission plaque, which contains a dedication to the MAF's reconstruction. It also commemorates the first anniversary of September 11th and reads:

Welcome to Romeo-0

The renovation of this Missile Alert Facility, known as Romeo, and dedicated this very day, culminates Project Alert Image – AFSPC's [Air Force Space Command] initiative to improve quality of life and sustain the weapon system through 2020.

Team Malmstrom dedicates this facility in remembrance of the tragedy of September 11, 2001, and the legacies of Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Throughout this brand new Missile Alert Facility are images capturing the heroic contributions of our nation's warriors and the Patriotism of its People.

"The attack on our Nation was also an attack on the ideals that make us a Nation. Our deepest National conviction is that every life is precious, because every life is the gift of a Creator who intended us to live in liberty and equality. More than anything else, this separates us from the enemy we fight. We value every life; our enemies value none – not even the innocent, not even their own. And we seek the freedom and opportunity that give meaning and value to life." September 11, 2002, 9:01 P.M. EDT, President's Remarks to the Nation.

The lounge has shadow boxes and patriotic images associated with 11 September 2001 that echo this patriotic theme. These images include a folded American flag commemorating the dedication ceremony and the renovations to the facility. Other images include posters based on the theme of "No Man Left Behind," commemorating the loyalty and brotherhood associated with the military forces.

The tone of the decorations changes in its hardened below ground facilities. The Romeo MAF exhibits the most dramatic murals of the five MAFs in the 564th MS. The first mural is located across from the elevator in the LCC. It represents a large dragon rising out of a nuclear blast cloud holding a missile. Beneath the cloud, written in letters that look like bones, is the word Deuce, a direct reference to the 564th MS. A skull sits in the "U" in "Deuce." The dragon theme is carried over into the air-conditioning (AC) unit mural, which has a central mural surrounded by a poem, entitled *Missileer* by Robert Wycof. It reads:

*In vacant corners of our land, off rutted gravel trails,
There is a watchful breed of men, who see that peace prevails.
For them there are no waving flags, no blare of martial tune,
There is no romance in their job, no glory at high noon.
In an oft' repeated ritual, they casually hang their locks,
Where the wages of man's love and hate, are restrained in a small red box.
In a world of flick'ring colored lights, and endless robot din,
The missile crews will talk awhile, but soon will turn within.*

*To a flash of light or other worldly tone, conditioned acts respond.
Behind each move, unspoken thoughts, of the bombs that lie beyond.
They live with patient waiting, with tactics, minds infused,
And the quiet murmur of the heart, that hopes it's never used.*

*They feel the loving throb, of the mindless tool they run,
They hear the constant whir, of a world that knows no sun,
Here light is ever present, no moon's nocturnal sway,
The clock's unnatural beat, belies not night or day.*

*Behind a concrete door slammed shut, no starlit skies of night,
No sun-bleached clouds in azure sky, in which to dance in flight.
But certain as the rising sun, these tactic warriors seldom see,
They're ever grimly ready, for someone has to be.*

*Beneath it all they're common men, who eat and sleep and dream,
But between them is a common bond, of knowledge they're a team.
A group of men who love their land, who serve it long and well,
Who stand their thankless vigil, on the brink of man-made hell.*

*In boredom fluxed with stress, encapsuled they reside,
They do their job without complaint, of pleasures off' denied.
For duty, honor, country, and a matter of self-pride.*

The dragon in this mural is in profile and holds a missile, changing the focus of the theme from the power of the Deuces to the loyalty and brotherhood of the 564th MS and all missileers. In the top left-hand corner and the bottom right-hand corner of the AC panel mural are 564th MS emblems. Another mural over the tunnel from the LCC to the tunnel junction reads "Romeo – FLT." It does not have the dragon theme but instead is based on the American flag and incorporates the stars and stripes. The wallpaper theme in the Romeo MAF appears to be the Caribbean viewed from a balcony.

ACRONYMS

AC	Air-conditioning
AFSPC	Air Force Space Command
LCC	Launch Control Center
LCSB	Launch Control Support Building
LF	Launch Facility
MAF	Missile Alert Facility
MAFB	Malmstrom Air Force Base
MS	Missile Squadron
MW	Missile Wing
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty