



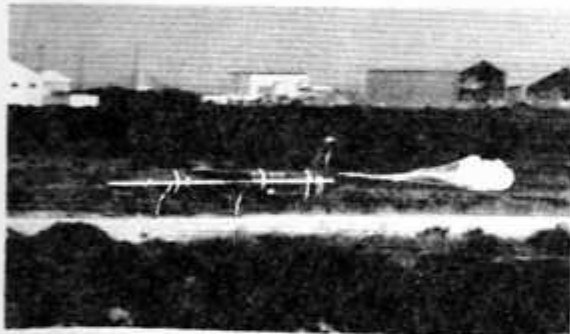
# MTP News

SEPTEMBER 1988  
NEWS OF THE MISSILE TEST PROJECT

FINAL EDITION

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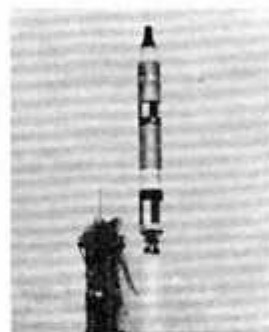
## The RCA Missile Test Project 1953-1988



SNARK



MERCURY/REDSTONE



GEMINI/TITAN



APOLLO/SATURN



BOMARC



PERSHING



THOR



ATLAS



POLARIS



MATADOR



DELTA



TRIDENT

### The Making Of A Missile Range!

Cape Canaveral was unanimously recommended. The proximity of the old Banana River NAS for supporting technical and administrative facilities, the sparsely settled land in the Canaveral area and the suitable year-round climate where major considerations in selection of the site.

Originally conceived as a joint operation administered by the Army Air Forces, responsibility for administration was transferred to the Air Force after its establishment in 1947.

Later, full responsibility for operation and administration was assigned to the Air Force and on May 16, 1950, the designation was changed to Long Range Proving Ground Division and given major air command status. The base was then renamed Patrick Air Force Base in honor of the late Major General Mason M. Patrick, a pioneer in military aviation development.

First missile launch was on July 24, 1950. It was a two-stage rocket, actually a German V-2 with a WAC Corporal missile inserted in the nose, timed to fire when the V-2 had reached its maximum speed.

Named "Bumper" the missile was developed by General Electric for experimental purposes. Previously it had been fired vertically, but the opening of the Florida Long Range Proving Ground offered the first opportunity to fire the missile horizontally.

After "Bumper" came "Lark" another experimental missile, then an operational weapons system the Martin B -61 "Matador" - and "Bomarc".

In 1952, RCA Government Services was awarded a contract by the Air Force to provide technical and training services of limited scope to the Air Force Missile Center. Twenty-six RCA field representatives, headed by S. D. Heller, were assigned here as part of the contract. It was a forerunner of the RCA Missile Test Project.

Meanwhile, to assure a continuous supply of personnel for the Missile Test Program the Air Force made its decision to put portions of the range activity under contractor operation. In May 1952, invitations for proposals were sent to some 30 firms. Among the companies responding to the invitation was RCA which viewed with lively interest the space activities under way here.

A significant event happened on June 30, 1953, when the Air Force awarded to Pan American World Airways, a company with long experience in aviation and a record of highly successful operations in the Caribbean sea area, a letter of intent for negotiations of a definitive contract.

To provide engineering and technical aspects of the testing operation, the Air Force and Pan American Airways contracted with Radio Corporation of America, world leaders in electronic research and development.

With PAA organizing its guided Missile Range Division and the Government Service Department of RCA Service Company, Inc., establishing the Missile Test Project, the two contractors started preliminary work at the Air Force Missile Test Center in July, 1953. Upon signing of formal contracts on December 31, 1953, the PAA/RCA status became official.

A. L. Conrad, who had been actively involved in the negotiations, was named the first Project Manager for MTP.

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The missile tracking business was in a primitive state when RCA began the task of phasing in personnel in late 1953.

The nucleus of the original organization consisted of Pan Am GE operations, accounting and contracts, purchasing and personnel.

Starting in November, 1953 as PAA/RCA personnel became familiar with the operation, they commenced assuming responsibility for some phases of testing operations.

While RCA was assuming its assigned technical role at Cape Canaveral, it was also preparing for what was to be an important milestone. On February 15, 1954, a static test of the Snark was conducted, the first test involving MTP technical support. Three days later, it was launched. At the time, there were only four launch pads at the Cape and just one downrange station at Grand Bahama Island operational at the time.

Cape Canaveral operations were taken over on March 1, 1954, and by July 1, 1954, full responsibility was in the hands of PAA GMRD and RCA MTP.

At the time, there were only four launch pads at the Cape and just one operational downrange station at GBI.



Taken in late 1953, this photo shows some members of the contractor military team who were actively involved in planning and organizing range activities. They are front row: C. M. Odorizzi, General W. L. Richardson, and Robert Seidel. Second row: Admiral Dorsey Foster, Pickney Reed, E. C. Cahill, R. S. Mitchell. Third row: W. T. A. Baxter, RCA pilot, J. F. Thompson, S. D. Heller, A. L. Conrad and Major Simmons.

Mayaguez, Puerto Rico



Assigned to Jupiter back in 1953 were Al Menard, Gene Kociuba, Ken Aitken and Joe Soich.

