

MISSILE MAINTAINERS

By Robert A. Wyckoff

In the missile wings across the northern tier,
There is a special breed of airmen whose performance has no peer.
In conditions oft' demanding, both ambient and professional,
It appears that these maintainers truly are exceptional.

They qualify for a TS clearance and pass the PRP,
At an age when most are still deciding what they want to be.
They learn their discipline from those who went before,
To fulfill their basic duty of deterring nuclear war.

The FMTs are "Buttcracks", the EMTs chase sparks,
The MMTs are "Knuckle Draggers" in maintainers' rude remarks.
But it's just a way among them to try to keep things light,
As they labor at maintaining our nation's missile might.

Their day begins at 0-4-hundred dark,
They get their tools and briefings; then deploy in weather stark.
They reach their destination in early morning light,
And begin the age-old ritual to penetrate the site.

They clear away the snow and start the B plug down,
When done, they wait for the OZ set before heading back to town.
But between these waits there's a challenge they must meet,
To preserve the 'ready' status of our aging missile fleet.

With fatigue and cold turning minds and bodies numb,
"Do your job and get it right," is their constant rule of thumb.
When work is done--across time's grinding span,
They turn in their tools, debrief; then go fuel and wash their van.

Although they are invisible but to some precious few,
These unsung men and women are to selves and nation true,
They, from within, their pride and strength renew.

Written at the request of Col. Michael Lutton (completed 21 June 2011) to honor all
Maintainers and the 532nd Training Squadron. Artwork courtesy of James Atwater.

