

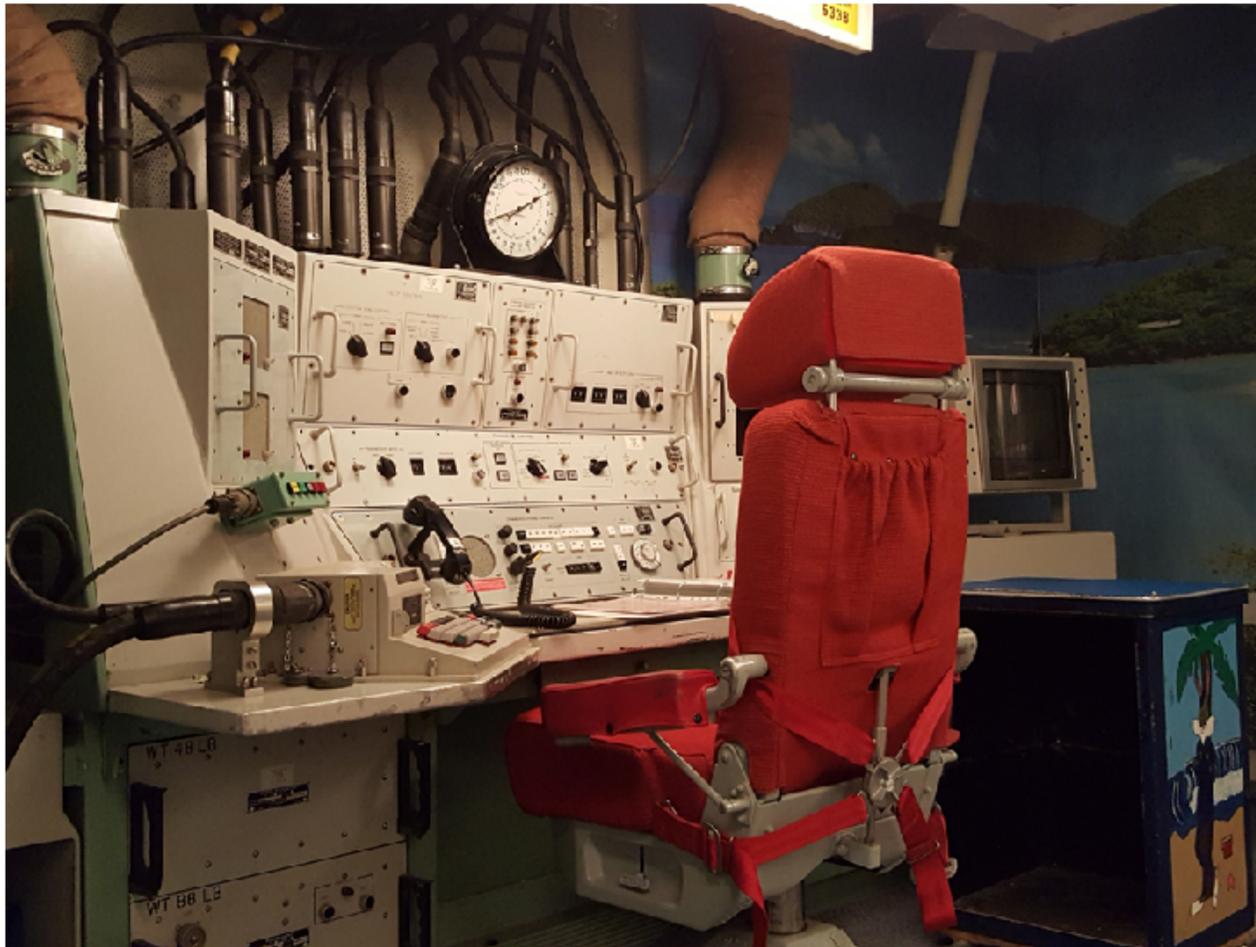


Painted Mural OSCAR-0 Minuteman Alert Facility, Cooperstown, North Dakota  
Photo: Peggy Weil

## UNSUNG! Songs of the Missileers

Peggy Weil 2025

1. RIGHT NOW
2. IT'S A NO LONE ZONE (Duet)
3. DEEDLE DEEDLE (Duet)
4. IN A HEARTBEAT
5. RIGHT NOW
6. DARK THOUGHTS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
7. UNSUNG
8. STILL HERE Flirtin' With Disaster



Command Console, Oscar-0 LCC Ronald Reagan Minuteman Alert Facility  
Cooperstown, North Dakota Photo: Fifer Garbesi, Emblematic Group

## 1. RIGHT NOW

Right Now  
365 24/7

As we are singing  
As you are sitting

This moment and the next one  
And the last one  
Right now

Missileers  
(Air Force) Officers!  
Working in pairs  
Men and Women  
Young Men Young Women

Are standing ready underground  
On Alert  
Beneath the Plains  
Beneath the Prairies

Waiting for the command  
A *legitimate* command  
A *lawful* command  
To launch

Right now  
365 24/7

As we are singing  
As you sitting

Missileers are on alert  
They're just always there  
Right now

Missileers  
Under Wyoming  
Under North Dakota  
Under Montana

Standing Ready  
Waiting for the command  
a lawful command  
Ever ready

Right now  
365 24/7

As we are singing  
As you are sitting

This moment and the next one and  
Perhaps our very last one  
Right now

Ready to launch



Blast Doors, Oscar-0 LCC Ronald Reagan Minuteman Alert Facility  
Cooperstown, North Dakota Photo: Fifer Garbesi, Emblematic Group

## 2. IT'S A NO LONE ZONE (Duet)

On Alert  
We work in pairs  
It's a NO LONE ZONE

We go under  
Sixty feet under  
Two of us  
Alone Together  
All (of the) Day and All (of the) Night  
Twenty-four hours

On Alert  
In the NO LONE ZONE  
Working in Pairs  
A lone individual is prohibited.

TWO PERSON CONCEPT  
MANDATORY  
Two authorized people at all times  
NO EXCEPTIONS!  
It's the rule!

Working together, we're a team  
It's a level of trust  
We work as a pair  
We think as a pair

We go under  
Sixty feet under

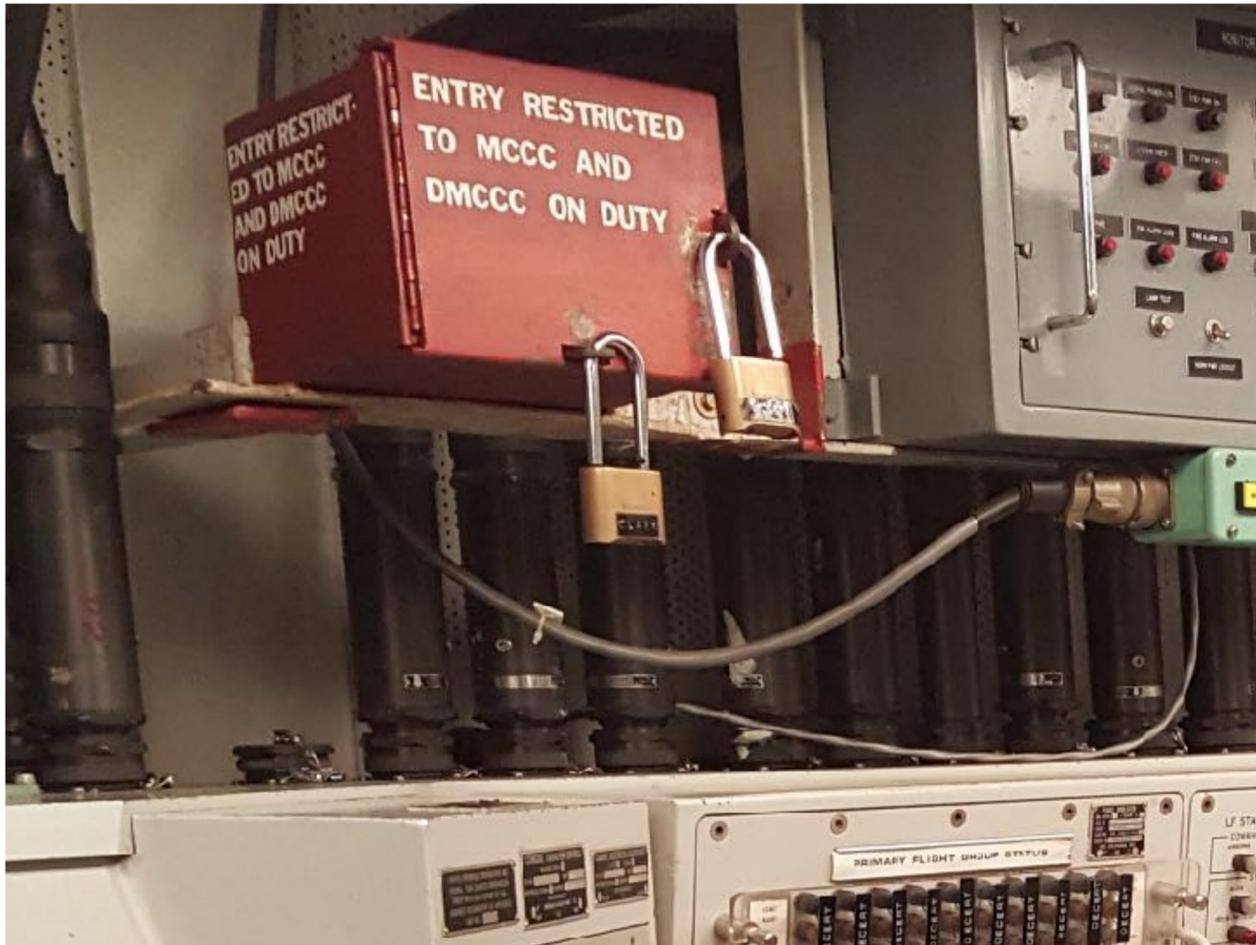
We practice the same things over  
and over  
and over and over again

On Alert  
It's a NO LONE ZONE  
Sixty feet under  
Two of us  
Alone Together

On Alert  
Double (double) checking  
We can't be too careful  
We're a team  
It's a matter of trust

Waiting for  
(Hoping for, Praying for)  
Nothing  
To happen

In the NO LONE ZONE



Command Console, Oscar-0 LCC Ronald Reagan Minuteman Alert Facility  
Cooperstown, North Dakota Photo: Fifer Garbesi, Emblematic Group

### 3. DEEDLE DEEDLE (Duet)

Warble Tone: SAC Primary Alert System: 900/1400 Hz

You'd hear the [Deedle Deedle]  
Time to do what Uncle Sam wanted

You'd hear the [Deedle Deedle]  
Time to do what Uncle Sam wanted

You'd hear the [Deedle Deedle]  
You hoped the people above you  
knew what they were doing.

If they gave the order, a lawful order, to  
*Not push the button, there isn't any button*

To turn the key  
*Not one key, TWO keys*

Two sets of keys  
Two sets of locks  
We each have our own keys  
We each have our own locks  
Can't do it alone, It's a No Lone Zone

We do the check-sum  
Does it add up?  
If it's a match it's a go

Authentication  
Verification  
Validation  
Corroboration  
Cooperation  
Multiple redundancies to turn the keys

Can't be too careful  
If it's a match  
It's a go  
To any target in the world

Two sets of keys  
Two sets of locks  
We each have our own keys  
We each have our own locks  
Can't do it alone It's a No Lone Zone

Enter the data  
Add it all up you get a number  
A Check-Sum Number  
If it's a match you know it's right

A lawful order to  
*Not push the button, there isn't any button*  
To turn the key  
*Not one key, TWO keys*  
We each have our own keys  
We each have our own locks

You hear the [Deedle Deedle]  
Time to do what Uncle Sam wanted

You hear the [Deedle Deedle]  
Time to do what Uncle Sam wanted  
You hope the people above you know what they are doing.

If it's a match  
It's a go

To any target in the world



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HAER No. ND-13 A-00

#### 4. IN A HEARTBEAT

Would you do it?

Absolutely, without a doubt.

No mental hesitation about that whatsoever

In a heartbeat.

We were tested.

We were trained.

Programmed to not even hesitate

Part of the ethos, to do what you have to do

You didn't play games out there.

You do what you have to do.

Would you do it?

If they told us to launch we would launch,

If the message comes, I'm not going to think

I'm going to act

It's the way we were trained

We practiced so much

If the real thing happened

We were programmed to not even hesitate

Come hell or high water

You had to be ready to do it.

Would you do it?

Would have done it in a heartbeat, even today

I would have launched

I have no doubt

We were

We are

100% committed.

All of us are

You didn't play games out there.

You do what you have to do.

Would you do it?

If they told us to launch we would launch,

If the message comes, I'm not going to think

I'm going to act

Come hell or high water

You had to be ready to do it.

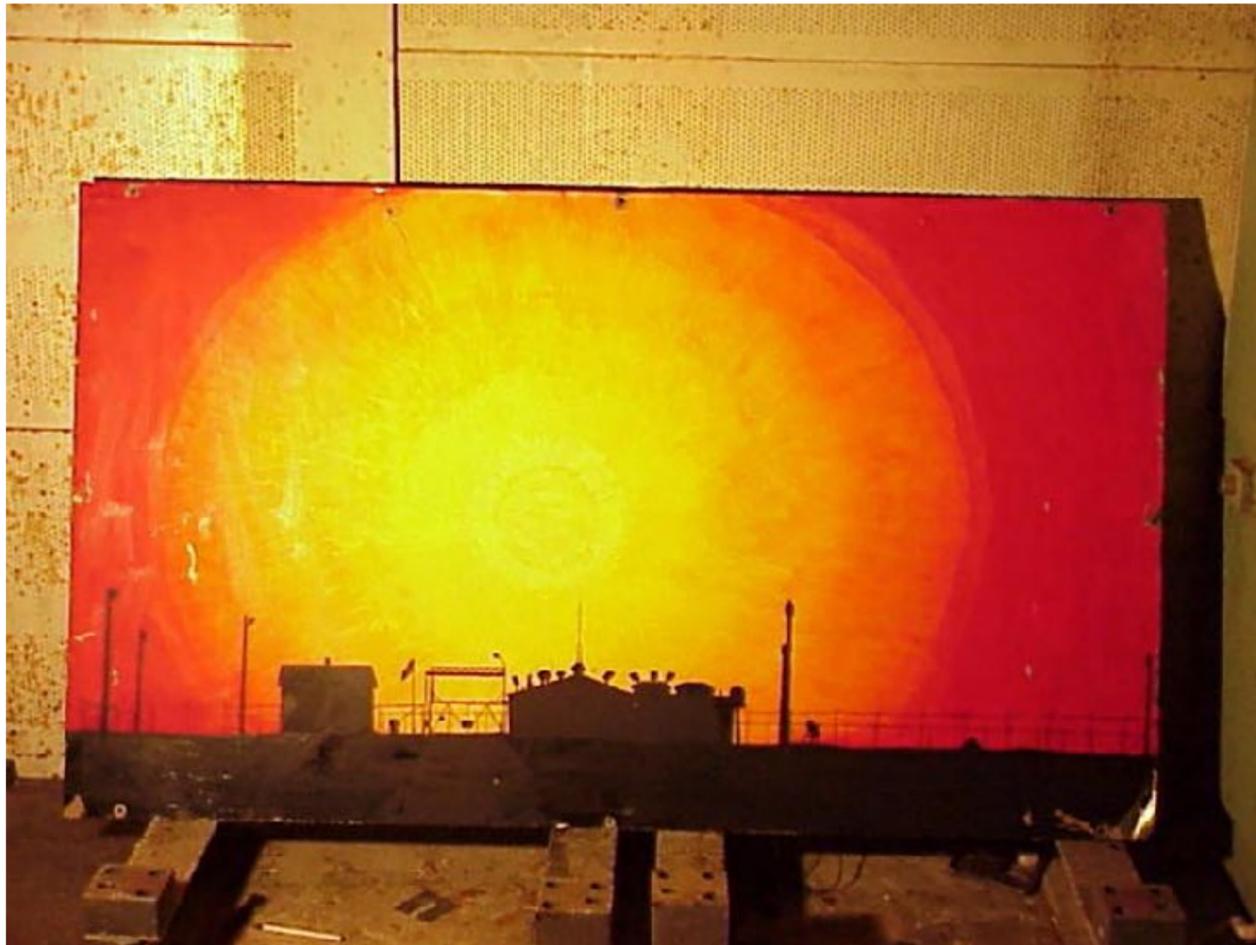
You didn't play games out there.

You do what you have to do.

Would you do it?

Absolutely, without a doubt.

In a heartbeat.



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## 5. MISSILE MINDSET

I make a point of not remembering

That night  
I thought long and hard  
about what exactly my job was out there

We were trained,  
Programmed to perform  
We were the finger on the trigger  
The human component

I make a point of not remembering

That time  
I put in the key once  
That was different  
The longest eight or nine minutes of my life

Nobody knew what was happening next  
Is there more?  
Is this it?  
Is it done?

It was serious  
We were serious

I make a point of not remembering

You sit here in the middle of the night  
And you look at the little red box

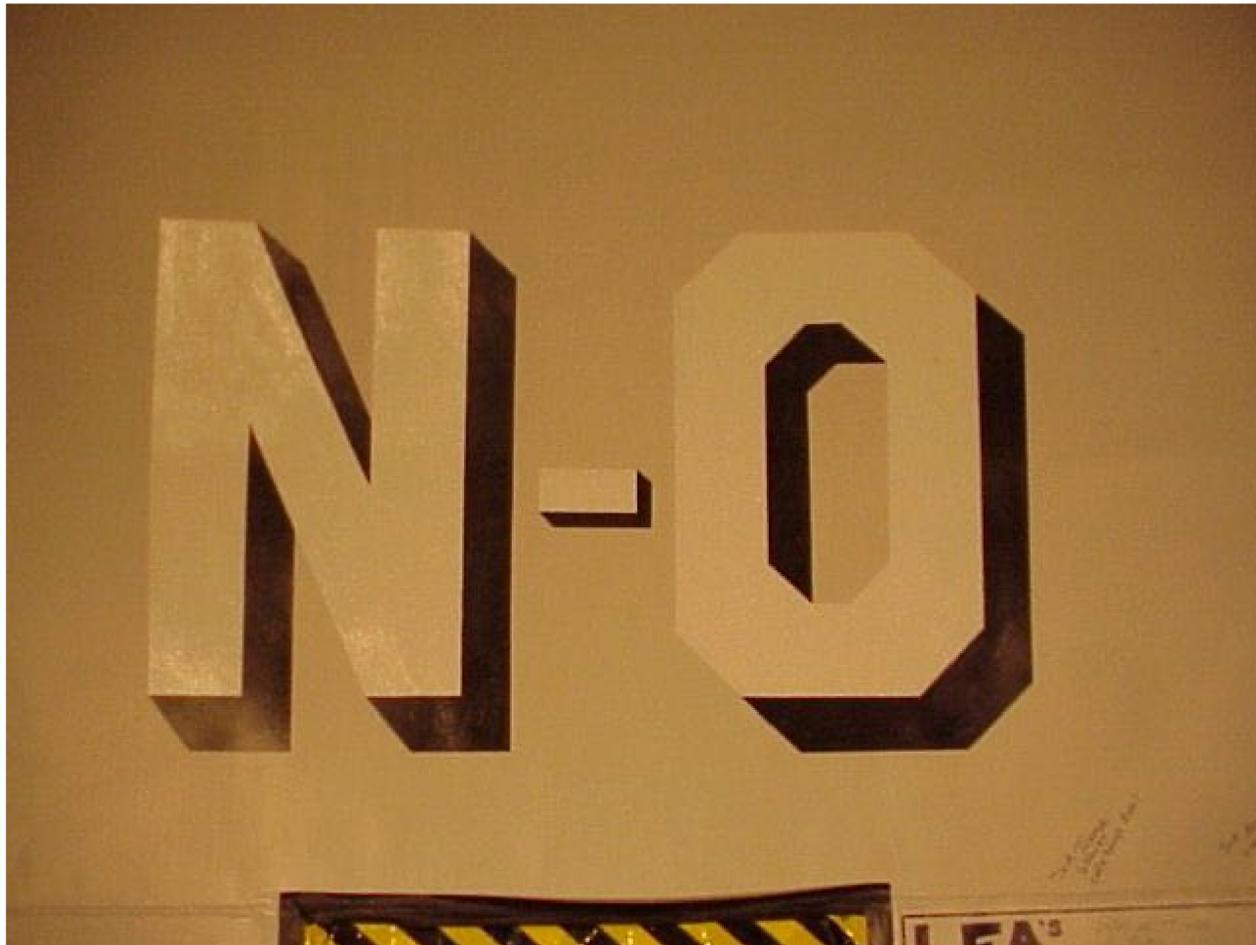
And then  
It's absolutely real  
And what you're doing is crystal clear  
And it ought to scare you

I make a point of not remembering

Nobody knows what is happening next  
Is there more?  
Is this it?  
Is it done?

We are trained, drilled  
Programmed to perform  
We are human component  
We are the finger on the trigger

I make a point of not remembering



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## 6. DARK THOUGHTS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

I sometimes still dream about those days  
and going on alert  
The rumble of the air  
The distant vibration

In the middle of the night  
At 2 AM  
The walls start coming in on you  
Dark thoughts  
In the middle of the night

Waiting for the message  
That you hope never comes

You would kill millions of people

I spoke to my Pastor  
I knew I was going to do it.  
I didn't want to go to hell for it

I think I was lying to myself  
About what my conscience was telling me  
About my certainty  
Of it being a moral action  
It was a deal I made with the Devil so to say

You would kill millions of people

There was a close call once  
An incident (a documented incident)

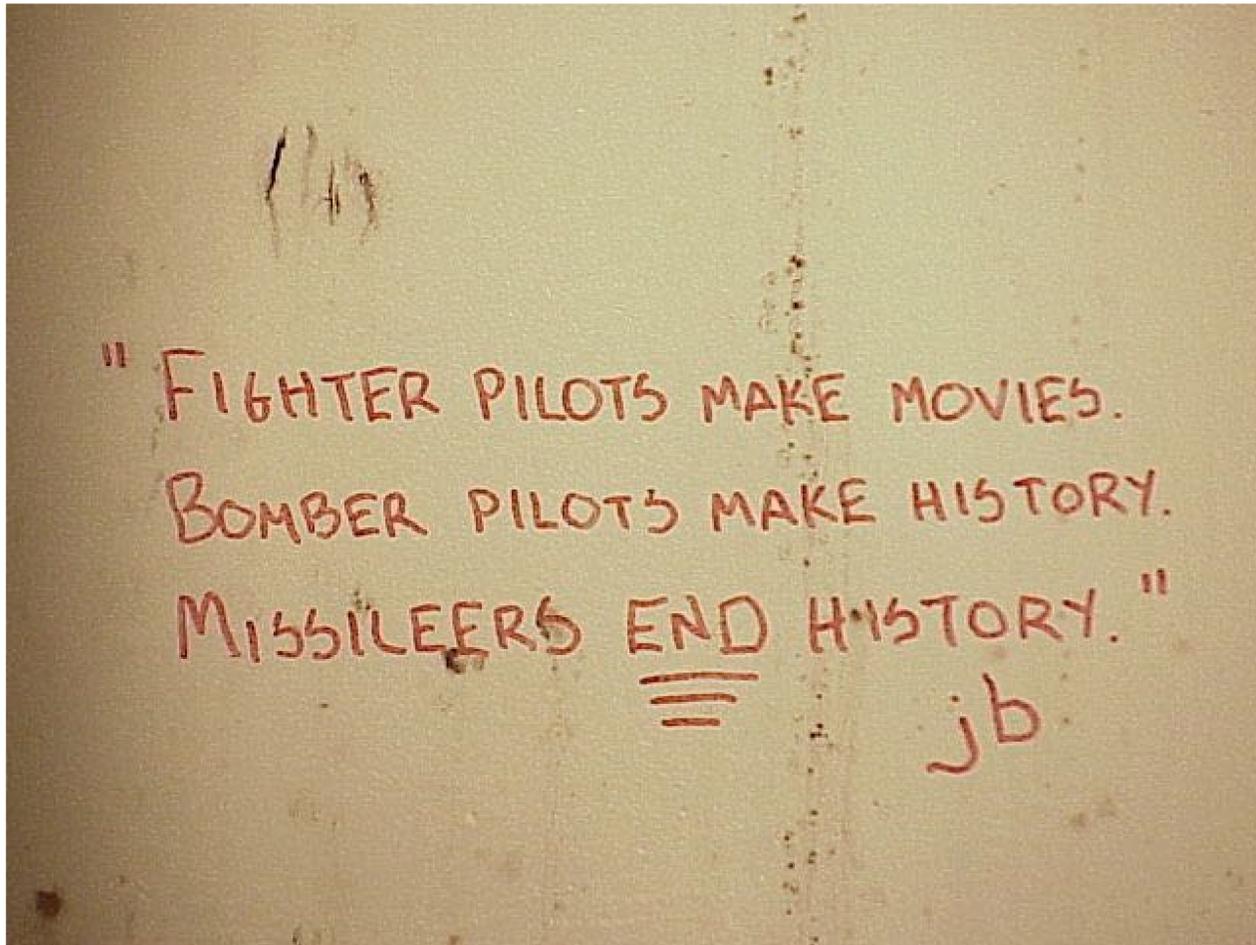
We had our keys in

I called my wife:  
What's going on? (I asked)  
Is there something in the news? (I wondered)  
Something unusual happening?  
(An explanation? Corroboration?)  
"No," she said,  
"It doesn't look like anything is happening at all."

So I said, "Good Bye."  
To millions of people

Dark thoughts in the middle of the night  
The walls coming in  
The rumble of the air  
The distant vibration

Say Good Bye  
To millions of people.



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## 7. UNSUNG

Fliers get all the attention  
Flying is the game

But  
We were the insurance  
The deterrence

Pilots soaring overhead  
Missileers below  
Out of sight, out of mind

You didn't even notice  
You didn't even know we were there

We won the cold war with deterrence  
You have us to thank

We fought the Cold War  
And We Won!

Without flying,  
Without flinching  
Without launching  
Without dying

Fliers get all the attention  
Flying is the game

But  
We were the insurance  
The deterrence

We won!  
The Cold War! It's over!  
(Is it over?)

Without flying,  
Without flinching  
Without launching  
Without dying

You didn't even notice  
You don't even know we're there.

You don't even notice  
You don't even know we're there.



Painted Mural OSCAR-0 Minuteman Alert Facility, Cooperstown, North Dakota  
Figure from Molly Hatchet album cover, "Flirtin' With Disaster" 1979  
Photo: Peggy Weil

## 8. STILL HERE Flirtin' With Disaster

Right now  
As we UNSUNG are singing  
As you are sitting  
Still the finger on the trigger  
Still here

Flirtin' with disaster  
Right now  
Not the hereafter  
Right now

Waiting for the command  
A legitimate command  
A lawful command  
Hoping the people above us know what they are doing  
Hoping that madness hasn't doomed us to launch

Still here

As we UNSUNG are singing  
As you are sitting  
Young Men Young Women  
Officers! On Alert  
Standing ready

There was a close call once

We had our keys in

Flirtin' with disaster

Right now

Not the hereafter

Right now

Dark thoughts in the middle of the night

The walls coming in

The rumble of the air

The distant vibration

Say Good Bye

To millions of people.

Right Now

365 24/7

This moment and the next one

and perhaps the very last one

Still Here

Say Good Bye

To millions of people.



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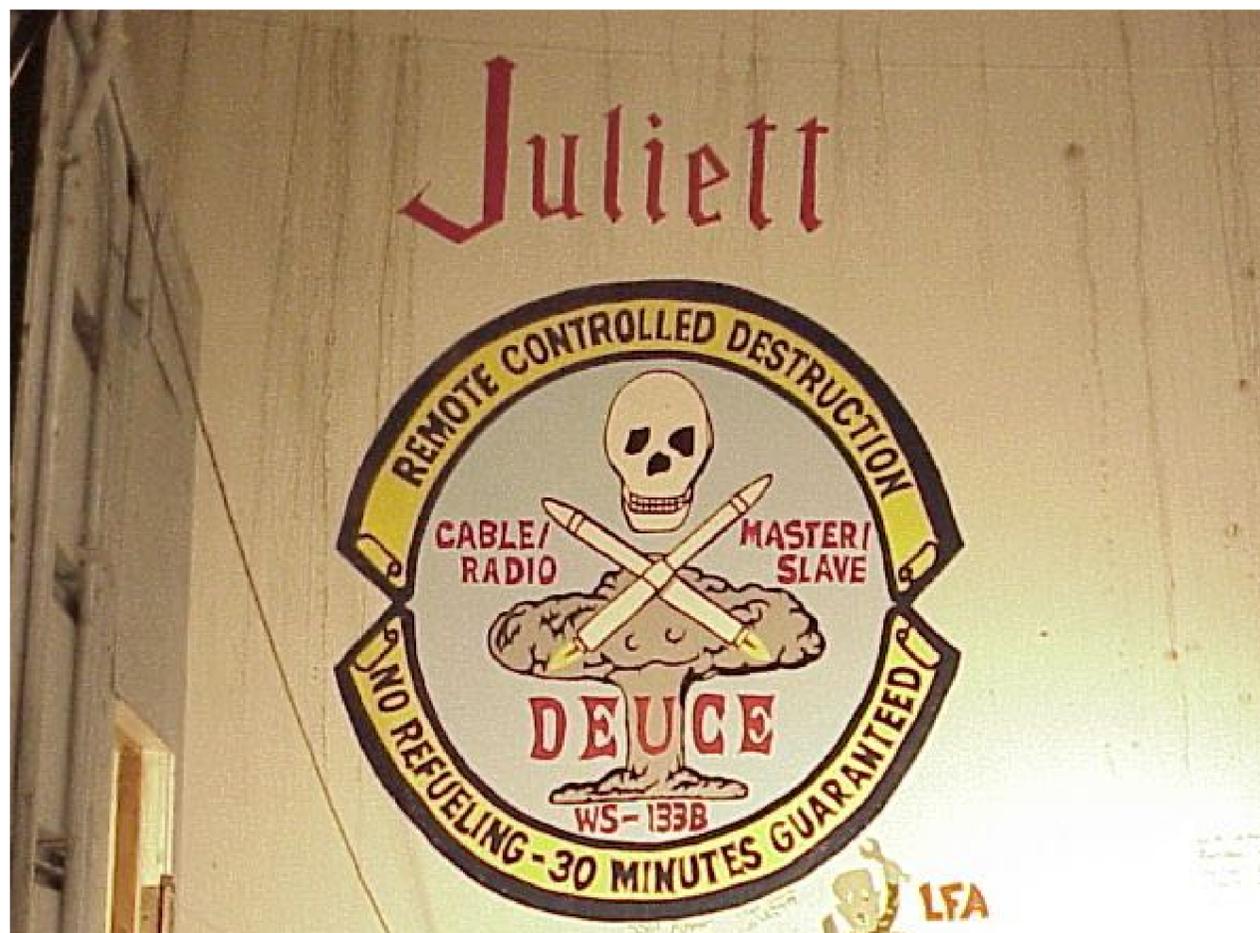
The words of UNSUNG, Songs of the Missileers, are drawn from conversations with former Missileers, U.S. Air Force officers keeping watch over our nuclear arsenal. Sources include Memories of the Missile Field: Oral Histories in the Grand Forks Missile Field, and the author's interviews and correspondence with former Missileers.

The murals, sometimes referred to as "Blast Door Art," were painted by Missileers within ICBM Missile Alert Facilities beginning in the 1980's. These works have been documented as part of the Historic American Engineering Record (HEAR), held in the Library of Congress. Additional images are from the author's 2016 trip to the Ronald Reagan Minuteman Missile Site, a decommissioned nuclear Launch Control Facility near Cooperstown, North Dakota.

The eight songs in UNSUNG belong to a series of Extended Landscapes, contemporary landscape portraits meant to extend our gaze beyond the usual frames: above our heads, beneath our feet, the out of sight and the out of mind.

Climate change demands that we adjust our vision to accommodate deep time and deep space in order to comprehend the pace and process of planetary change. Nuclear weapons demand that we acknowledge the existence and the experience of the humans charged with the responsibility to deploy them.

In their own words.



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## NOTES

### RIGHT NOW

The current ICBM force consists of 400 Minuteman III missiles located at the 90th Missile Wing at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo.; the 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom AFB, Mont.; and the 91st Missile Wing at Minot AFB, N.D. <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/104466/lgm-30g-minuteman-iii/>

### NO-LONE ZONE

In the United States Air Force (USAF) policy concerning critical weapons, a no-lone zone is an area in which the presence of a single individual is prohibited. The two-person concept requires the presence of two individuals knowledgeable of the task to be performed, and capable of detecting an incorrect or unauthorized procedure on the part of the other regarding the task being performed.

### DEEDLE DEEDLE

Deedle Deedle refers to the warble tone used to sound an alert in the Launch Control Centers (LCC's). This sound is made as a warble tone, 900/1400 Hz, and part of the integrated system made by Bell.

### STILL HERE Flirtin' With Disaster

The reference to Flirtin' With Disaster comes from the painted disc above an entry in Oscar-0. The image is from the 1979 Molly Hatchet album cover, "Flirtin' With Disaster" based on "Dark Kingdom," a painting by Frank Frazetta.



Historic American Engineering Record Grand Forks Air Force Base Painted Murals  
HAER No. ND-13 B-00

## ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Association of the Air Force Missileers: Victors in the Cold War, Turner Publishing, 1998

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Rehearsing for Doomsday: Memoire of a Nuclear Missile Crew Commander. Scott Cook, McFarland, 2021

Russia's Nuclear Warriors, Directed by Leslie Woodhead PBS NOVA, Nov 6, 2001

The Greatest Weapon Ever Used, A Missileer Story, Directed by John Mollison