February 2012

# RAMMPAGE

*Official Publication of the Radio Aero Modelers of Montgomery*

Online @ www.RammRCClub.com

Please send articles, photographs and other materials to George Demuth at

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For those who have not been to the club web site lately, you are in for a real treat. Many thanks to Earl for the redesign. The new site has a lot of great information.

Where is the New meeting place?
See page Two

Come join us for great outdoor fun at one of the finest fields in the south ! Get directions @ www.RammRCClub.com

Guests are Welcome!!

Our flying site encompasses approximately 10 acres situated 5 miles south of Montgomery. We have been told we have one of the best sites in the Southeast. Our runway is approximately 800' long by 100' wide, planted with Bermuda grass cut to 1“ so it looks like a golf course. We have a covered pavilion with AMA rules, frequency pins, tables, chairs and first aid kits.

WEATHER OUTLOOK

It has been too cold, wet or windy to fly. I still think we should buy the coleseum so we can fly in controlled conditions all year. Could someone please tell me how to spell colluseeum?

**Program for February**

**Flying into the Future**

**Electric Trainer Demo**

**And many other Items**

## Current Officers:

President – Frank Wercinski

Vice President – Denny Brown

Treasurer – Jim Windham 334-567-6937

Secretary – Earl Mayton

Safety Officer - SooperDave Carlton

Web Master – Earl Mayton

*Next meeting is Tuesday February 7 , at 7:00pm. Please support the club by attending !!Guests are welcome to attend.*

Stay behind the orange barrier. Protect yourself from poorly guided missiles. I may be flying.

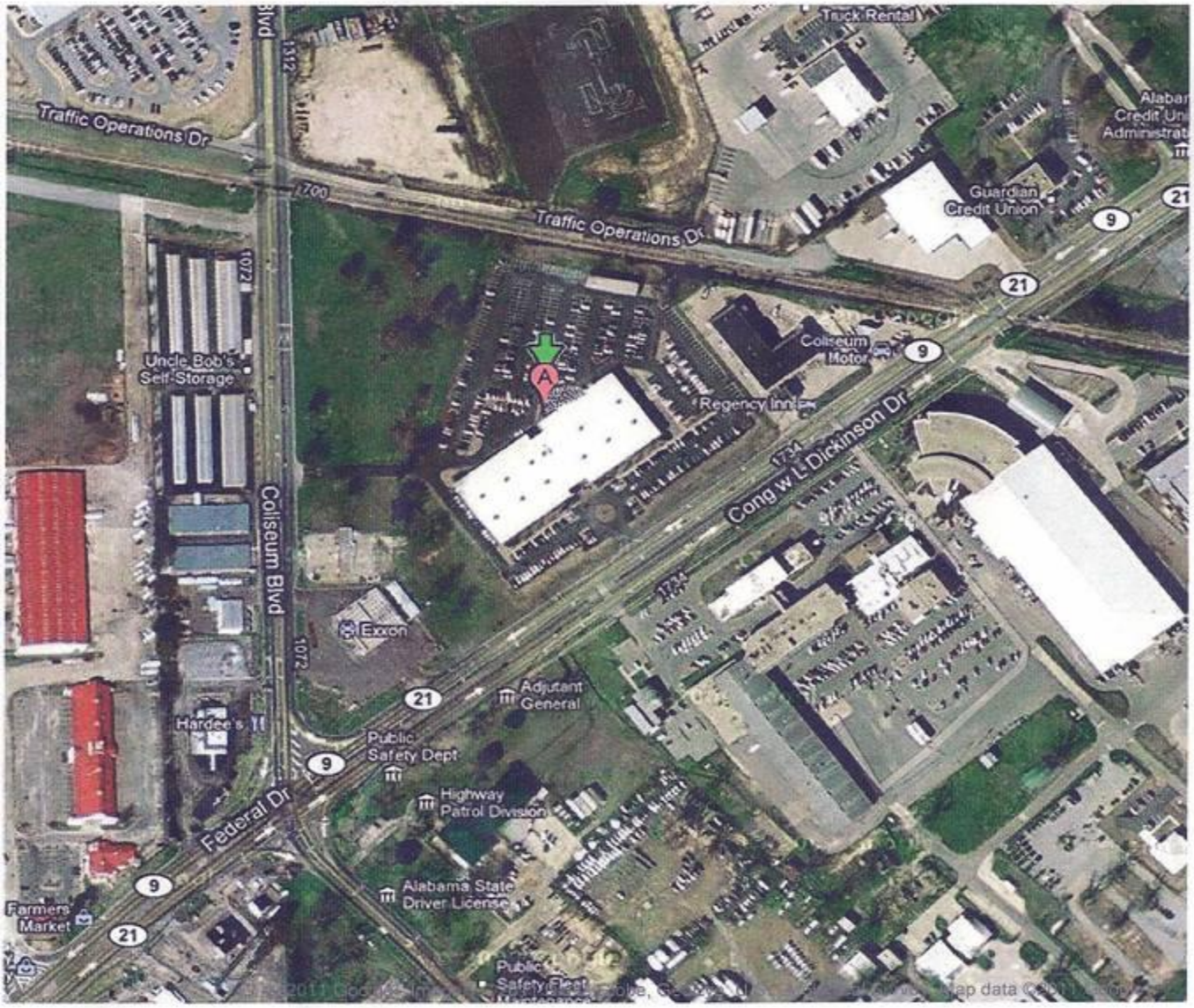
Stay out of hot sun.

Keep your fingers and face out of moving propellers

Fly Safe & Be Safe !

# New Meeting Place

The Tuesday of March 1, 2011 we will start meeting at our new site at 1751 Congressman WL Dickinson Drive. To get there you can head north on Coliseum Blvd to Cong Dickson Drive. Turn right and it  is the first huge building on the left. I am providing a hyperlink to the Google map. Can anyone tell me how to spell coliseum? In the overhead below, the building in which we meet is marked by the green arrow atop the pink thing with the A in it.



# Sea Lanes, Sulfur and Sweet Oil
# or
# Are We Having
# an
# "Iran, Make My Day" Moment

Will Iran block the Straights of Hormuz? Do we want them to do so? Are we trying to provoke them into an act of war? How does their navy and air force stack up against ours? I'll try to learn something about their war machine, but even without research I think we already know where we'd bet our money.

First of all, do we need oil from the Persian Gulf? I have spent hours researching this question. Information about crude oil production, import, export and refining is complicated and confusing. I'll try to convey what my impressions are. We have been importing progressively less crude from the Persian Gulf in recent times. We import crude from many sources and at least in the short haul could do without Persian Gulf oil. The United States produces some of the finest sweet light crude in the world. Sweet means low in sulfur and light refers to specific gravity. West Texas Intermediate is a world standard. It comes from Texas. Ohio, Pennsylvania and some other US sites produce sweet light crude. We also import some of the Brent sweet light crude from the UK and other North Sea countries. I have held a bottle of this type oil just once; it is transparent and smells like fine French perfume. Almost. Its color is that of human plasma, a faint yellowish tint. It is cheap and easy to refine and produces the higher grades of distillate.

Oil from the Gulf of Mexico is much heavier and, if I remember correctly, has a higher sulfur content. Sulfur is toxic. It is less desirable. We import about 25% of our crude from Canada. Much of this is delivered to refineries in the Midwest and sold in the US. Canadian Tar sand oil is high in sulfur content, difficult to extract and refine. Multinational companies in Texas foreign trade zones can refine it also. When we start importing more of this stuff it will be refined by these companies and exported, duty free. Meanwhile we are exporting gasoline and other products at an increasingly higher rate. We have large strategic reserves of crude in Texan salt caves. I haven't mentioned fracking that goes on in Ohio and Pennsylvania. First of all 'fracking' is an obscene word often spoken on the new Battle Star Galactica series, and secondly the process is not being well exploited at this time. But it can release more natural gas than certain persons we know.

Bottom line; a blockade would be of little consequence to us so far as short and medium term oil availability is concerned, but prices would increase, and who doesn't love a well justified shootin' war?

Oh, I forgot. Libya produces very high quality sweet light crude, and its production is now ramping up. Also, the majority of Persian Gulf oil goes to Asia and other points east. Oil prices are set internationally so any concerns about oil supply results in increased prices all over the world, even the US.

Now to military concerns. Iran ranks 12 in world militaries. After checking a number of sources I came up with the following figures. US air force's inventory contains 18,324 total aircraft; 6,417 are helicopters. Iran's air force totals 1030 aircraft with 357 being helicopters. We might just have a little edge here. The US Navy possesses 2,384 ships: 11 carriers, (Iran 0); 59 destroyers, (Iran 3); US submarines 75, (Iran about 20 give or take); 30 frigates, (Iran 5); US mine warfare ships 14, (Iran 7).

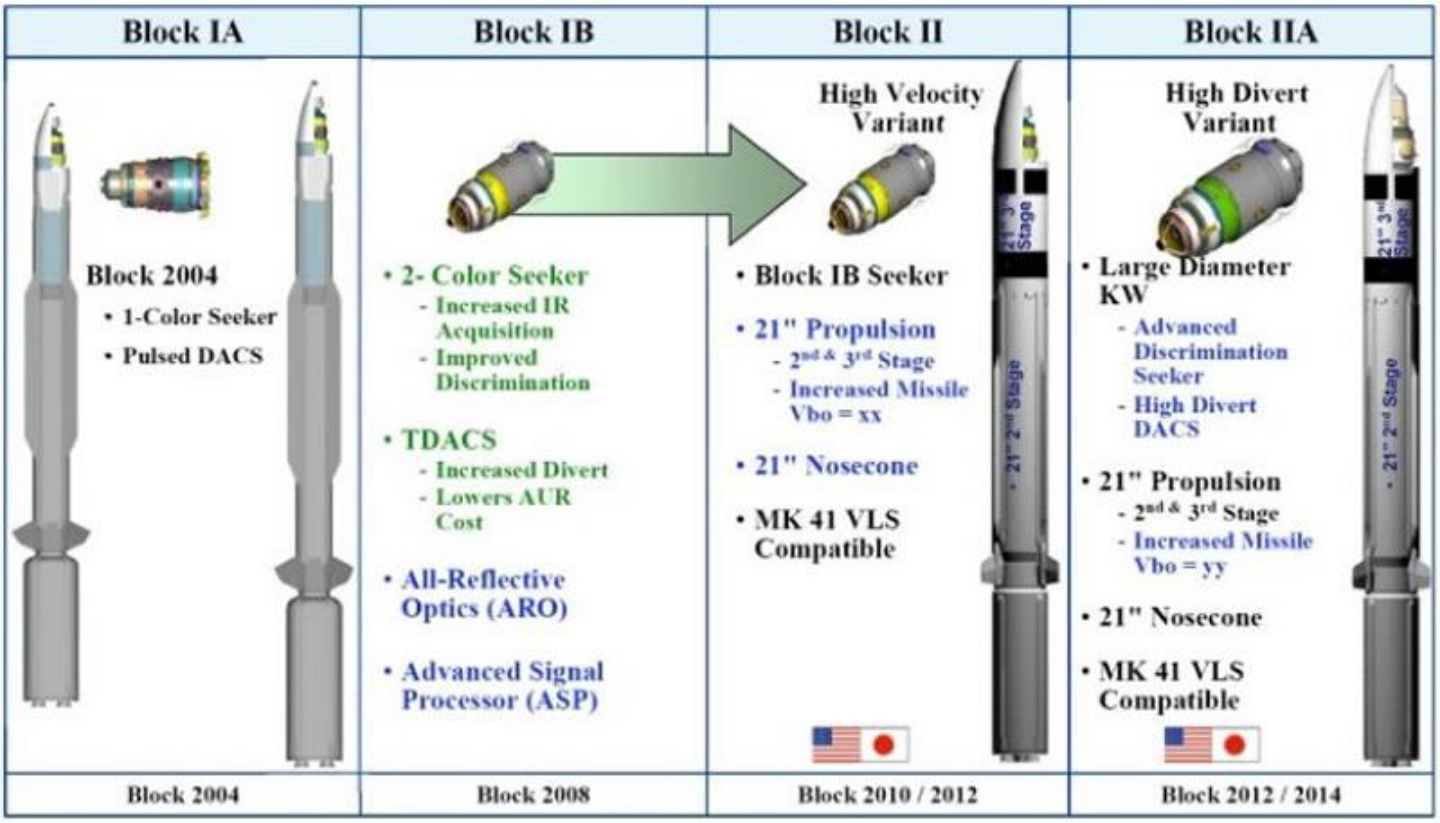
Some details. Iran appears to be less outgunned in mine warfare than in other categories. They rely on mining the gulf straits and nearby littoral waters. We will do no mining. My impression based on history of our clashes with Iran is that we have adequate mine detecting capabilities and we know how to take them out. The Iranians have about 17 miniature subs in their inventory. These can operate in the shallow waters of the gulf and surrounding shallow littoral waters. They have also acquired three Russian Kilo class subs which are extremely quiet and difficult to detect with passive sonar. I don't know but suspect that they can be detected with active sonar. I would imagine that in a naval action we would be doin' some pingin.' Of course this is just speculation on my part with no facts to back it up. Iran has no nuclear subs, though I don't know that they would be particularly useful in a close to home shallow water engagement. Again, my speculation but the fact that their navy has invested mostly in small diesel electric subs must say something about their strategy. I don't doubt that they have platforms that could launch a good number of weapons that would include anti ship missiles.

In fact the Iranians brag that they can destroy an American fleet with their anti ship missiles, some of which are claimed to be stealthy and supersonic. There is a video on line showing a launch of one of their missiles hitting and destroying a target ship. After the hit they show two guys in a helicopter kissing each other in glee multiple times. Now "isn't that special?" (Dana Carvey alias church lady quote.) They claim they are mass producing these things. Well I'm sure anyone can have a missile that manages to hit a sitting duck, but no threat should be ignored or dismissed without evidence. If we do have evidence that their threat is empty, ain't no one talkin'.

What we do know for sure is that Uncle Sam has been hard at work on missile defense for quite a few years. If you want plenty of detail on capabilities and contracts Google 'Raytheon's Standard Missile Naval Defense Family (SM-1 to SM-6). You'll find many pages of much more than you ever wanted to know about this subject, including how many millions awarded to many contracts. Also, we are developing littoral combat ships, (LCS) that would be useful in shallow, off shore environments. They can launch missiles and helicopters.

Let me say a few words about the SM-3. The first thing I'd say is if you really want to know anything substantial about it, Google it. I'm simply not smart enough or well informed enough to wade through the specialized language used to describe it in the Raytheon article. I'll try to find some information that I can wrap my head around. I will point out that nowhere in the sites I scanned did I see two guys spouting gobbeldy-gook and kissing each other.

The SM-1 and its variants are 3 stage rockets using a GPS aided inertial navigation system. It is generally carried on Ticonderoga class cruisers or Japanese Kongo class destroyers. It uses the Aegis Leap software and updated hardware. These control and targeting systems are under constant updating and development. Aegis enhancements will be able to integrate separate ships that are operating together. System upgrades provide the Navy the ability to defend against the anti-ship missiles of Iran and North Korea. No matter how much they kiss each other. (You really have to see that video). Below are some SM-3 family portraits. Ain''t they purty?



So, bottom line, I think we can take ‘em. Will we get hurt in the process? War usually entails some risk but we seem pretty well equipped for offense and defense. And it looks as if we have enough oil for the fleet. At least for now.

Will it come to blows? Some seem to think so, others not. Have a look at the SM-3 launch below. Littoral combat ships (LCS) exist and presumably their production will be stepped up. There are more weapon systems being deployed and developed that can be recounted here.