

*The following are comments were shared by Bill Thurneck. Bill worked during the nascent years of GAMBIT and HEXAGON.*

“Yeah, I was one of the early ones. There were about seven of us 2nd balloons who descended on Vandenberg in 1961. I worked for the real space pioneer—Rob Roy. Rob got the Discoverer/Corona program going and then switched to the Atlas-Agena launch site at Pt Arguello for the SAMOS reconnaissance program. That’s when I joined his team and after multiple unsuccessful E5/E6 SAMOS launches, we began launching GAMBIT payloads--the first launch was in mid-’63. I think Rob is still doing pretty well in his 90s. Another real pioneer was Don Mirth, who was also at Vandenberg with us and subsequently in the SP-14 SPO. I worked with/for Don when I was at Eastman Kodak. Don died not too long ago in Florida, after developing what he thought might have been an Agent Orange related condition. (He was a pilot and had a tour in Vietnam). Rob retired as a Colonel and Don as a one star. They were the two guys that I was closest to and thus I have always been more attuned to GAMBIT than to HEXAGON, even though I did serve in the SP-7 SPO for about three years.”