



U.S. Department of Justice

**Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms and Explosives**

Washington, DC 20226

www.atf.gov

December 16, 2014

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Mr. Stu Barrett
President, Tripoli Rocketry Association
1105 Deepwood Drive
Round Rock, Texas 78681

Dear Mr. Barrett:

This is in response to a recent request from Mr. Burl Finkelstein of Tripoli Rocketry Association (Tripoli), in which Mr. Finkelstein requested that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) confirm that sport rocketry airframes are not United States Munitions Import List (USMIL) items.

In ATF's decades of work with Tripoli and other sport and hobby rocketry associations, we have become familiar with the variety, sizes and types of rockets flown by rocketry enthusiasts. Rockets can range from small hobby items using small black powder motors to large, technically-advanced rockets comprising large airframes with electronic devices for measuring altitude and deploying a parachute, and using several pounds of propellant. Enthusiasts flying rockets at association-sanctioned launches must comply with safety guidelines promulgated by the associations, as well as ATF regulations, where applicable. Many rocketry enthusiasts maintain a Federal explosives permit issued by ATF.

Recently, an importation of a rocketry airframe (no propellant or other energetic materials) was held by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) pending verification that the airframe was not a USMIL item that would require an approved ATF Form 6 for release from CBP. ATF worked with the U.S. Department of State and CBP to clarify that this airframe was not a USMIL item, and could be released from CBP custody without ATF licensing or approval. It is noteworthy that generally, sport rocketry airframes are not military items and are not on the USMIL, and do not require ATF approval for importation.

We look forward to continuing our work with rocketry associations to ensure compliance with ATF public safety requirements, and the safe participation of enthusiasts in this educational and entertaining hobby and sport.

Mr. Stu Barrett

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the Explosives Industry Programs Branch at 202 648-7120.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael F. Fronczak", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael F. Fronczak
Chief, Firearms and Explosives
Industry Division