

# BLAZING SKIES!

US ARMY



AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY

Open House – Herminie Nike Site May 17, 1958



Photo: Gerry Mandel – Lchr Officer 1958

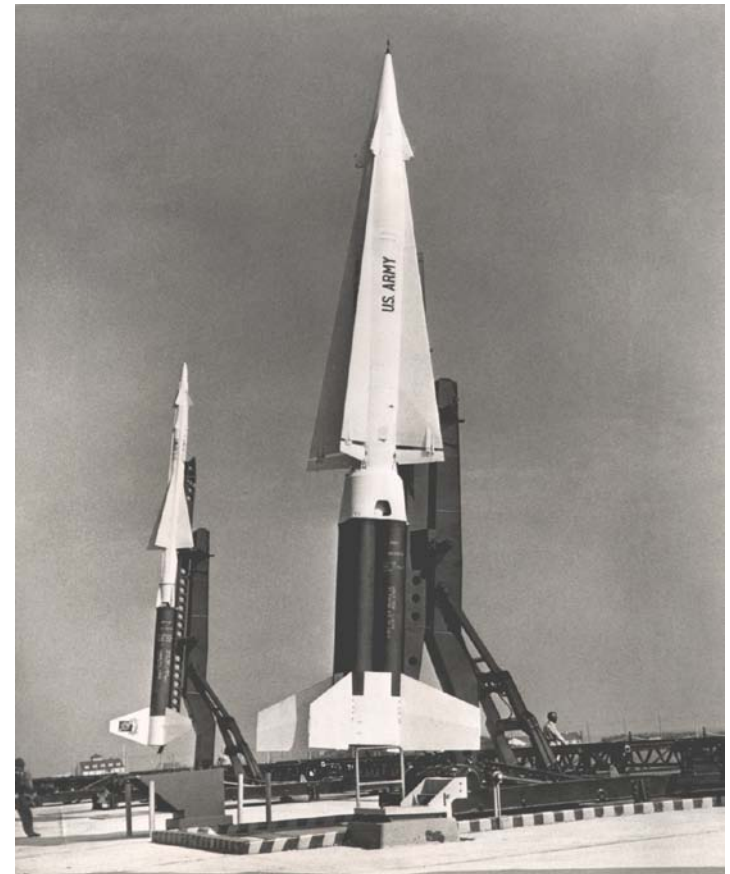


Photo: Stephen Maire Scan and touch up: Mike Cantrell

**Nike Site PI – 37**  
**PITTSBURGH AIR DEFENSE**  
**Herminie, Pennsylvania**  
**2008 Reunion**

# *Reunion Program*

*August 23, 2008*

*4:00 – 5:30 pm Photo Session - Program starts at 5:30 pm*

*Master of Ceremonies - Bill McCue*

## *Welcome*

*Bill McCue*

*Launcher Crewman 1957-1959*

## *Presentation of the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance*

*BSA Troop # 259, Herminie PA*

## *Invocation*

*Rev. B. Mitchell Byers*

*Acquisition Radar/Battery Clerk 1962-1965*

## *Buffet Dinner*

## *Reflections on 32 Years of Air Defense*

*Lt. Col. Anthony Laspada, U S Army (Retired)*

*Battery Commanding Officer 1971-1973*

## *Recognition of Battery Commanders*

*Frank Mellage*

*Launcher Platoon Leader 1968-1970*

## *Recognition of Military Retirees*

*Frank Mellage*

## *Memorial Tribute*

*Bill McCue*

## *Taps*

*Corey Flesik, Troop # 259*

## *Closing Prayer*

*Rev. B. Mitchell Byers*

## *Retiring of the Colors*

*Troop # 259*

*Visiting continues until 11:00 pm*



ARAACOM



USARADCOM  
ARADCOM



1<sup>ST</sup> Arty Regt  
1<sup>ST</sup> ADA



1<sup>ST</sup> Artillery

Early in 1957, Air Defense site PI-37, at Herminie Pennsylvania was officially activated. It was part of **ARAACOM** (Army Anti-Aircraft Command), and its designation was **B Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> AAA Msl Bn**. It was part of the Pittsburgh 18<sup>th</sup> ADA Grp. Army personnel assigned to B Battery had previously quartered and trained with C Battery at Irwin Pennsylvania while the site at Herminie was being constructed.

B Battery was one of 12 Nike Air Defense sites defending Pittsburgh. It was armed with the Nike Ajax, the worlds first operational, guided Surface to Air Missile. This missile carried high explosive warheads and had a range of around 30 miles with a ceiling of 70,000 feet.

In March 1957, **ARAACOM** was redesignated United States Army Air Defense Command (**USARADCOM**). In 1961, **USARADCOM** was shortened to **ARADCOM**.

In September, 1958, the Herminie Nike site was redesignated as **B Battery, 3<sup>rd</sup> Msl Bn, 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery Regiment**.

In the fall of 1959, B Battery personnel were sent to Ft. Bliss for Conversion Package training for the new Nike Hercules missile. The Hercules had the capability to attack supersonic aircraft with nuclear warheads at a range of around 90 miles and an altitude up to 150,000 feet. Beginning in 1962, the Improved Nike Hercules System with its greater range and accuracy was introduced to B Battery.

In 1959, 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery Regiment was redesignated as **1<sup>st</sup> Artillery**.

In 1971, the 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery was renamed **1<sup>st</sup> Air Defense Artillery**.

The Herminie Nike site was deactivated in mid 1974.

During its operational years, from 1957 to 1974, the Herminie Nike site was manned by an estimated 1,200 Regular Army personnel.