

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

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Guide prepared by: Sara Piasecki, Archivist

TITLE: John Minier Nike Site Summit Collection

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2018.018

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: 1960-1979

Extent: 1 box; 1.1 linear feet

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): U.S. Army

Administrative/Biographical History:

Information provided by the donor:

It may help to define my role and position at Site Summit in delineating the provenance of this guest book. I was the last Commanding Officer of B Battery, Site Summit, and, as such, was responsible of overseeing the deactivation and dismantlement of all operational and administrative elements of the site. I was initially assigned to Site Summit as the Executive Officer in late 1977, and took over as Commander early 1978. It was in 1979 that our entire Nike Hercules Battalion (1/43rd ADA) was deactivated and the units dismantled.

I first came across this guest book shortly after becoming Executive Officer at Site Summit. I found it in a small file folder in my office that contained solely items that I would call "memorabilia" in nature. [...] There were longstanding rumors that Marilyn Monroe, Omar Bradley, and many other dignitaries, performers, and celebrities had visited the site - but this Guest Book was the first (and only) documentation that I was ever able to find. I contacted as many past B Battery Commanders and Executive officers as I could to discuss this book, but none of them knew of its existence. This I can tell you - it was never an "official registry", military sign in roster, or other official document. Such official documents did exist: security sign in sheets, etc, all on appropriate AR forms. This Guest Book appeared to have been unofficially maintained, probably by past unit officers, as a way of capturing a flavor of notable visitors and life at Site Summit. Certainly not all visitors signed this book - it was not a military regulated requirement. I am not aware of any precursor book to this, nor of the existence of any latter period guest book.

That's all I can offer as far as provenance, so on to background and history. This book was kept in the administrative wing, Executive Officer's office, located in the main IFC building sitting atop Mt Gordon Lyon. The administrative wing also housed the First Sergeant's office, Battery Commander's office, Security Sergeant's office, Supply/Arms Room, Mail room, and small theater, all on the first floor of a two story structure. I have attached a decent aerial photo of this building as it existed shortly after deactivation in 1979. The admin wing is to the far right in the photo. To the far left was the mess hall. In the middle was the troop's Day Room (pool and ping pong tables, couches, TV) and small Post Exchange. In the middle rear of this photo was the Integrated Fire Control Operations Center, which contained operational control of the target acquisition, target tracking, and missile tracking and control radars, as well as the main control computer. The second floor of this building was occupancy/troop quarters. Any unmarried enlisted personnel were required to live on site, and typically this equated to 40 - 60 men. In addition, when the site was "hot", meaning the active unit of the three missile sites (A Battery and C Battery being the other two), all operational staff were on site 24 hours a day. This "hot" unit assignment rotated weekly in three week cycles. During "hot" weeks, as many as 90 personnel were billeted on site. Hence our own mess hall, mail room, theater, motor pool, etc.

The other main area of the site was the Launching Area, where the missiles and warheads were stored, secured, maintained, and, if necessary, fired. The Launching Area was approximately 3/4 mile below the upper IFC area. Today the Launching Area and some of its buildings are the only remaining structures, and are being carefully restored and maintained by the Friends of Nike Site Summit (FONSS).

Being isolated remote military bases housing troops, (separate from Ft Richardson), the three missile sites were frequented over the years (particularly in the 60's) by numerous USO performances - at Christmas and throughout the year. Owing to its uniqueness and proximity to Ft Richardson and Elmendorf AFB, Site Summit was also the preferred destination for visiting dignitaries and celebrities. It was unique in that it was a missile site - not all that common for the US Army. (In the 60's, these were a "new attraction"). And while there were numerous Nike Herc sites scattered across the lower 48, the Alaska sites were remote, self sustaining, fully enclosed, permanent units. Lower 48 sites tended to be mobile vans clustered in an operational configuration. We had a heliport located just below the IFC area, and most guests arrived by that means. Otherwise it was a 45 minute drive up and off Arctic Valley road, and it could be a treacherous drive in the winter.

Scope and Content Description:

The collection consists of one guest book maintained at Nike Site Summit, five black-and-white photographs, and ephemera pertaining to the closure of the site in 1979.

Arrangement: Arranged by format

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

Restrictions on Access: The collection is open for research use.

Physical Access: Original items in good condition.

Technical Access: No special equipment is needed to access the materials.

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Preferred Citation:

John Minier Nike Site Summit Collection; Anchorage Museum, B2018.018

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Donated by John Minier in 2017.

RELATED MATERIALS

Ronald Hahn Slides, B2016.021

SUBJECTS

Minier, John A.

United States. Army –Military life

Military bases –Alaska

Air defenses –Alaska

Nike rocket

Surface-to-air missiles –Alaska

Guided missile ranges

Antiaircraft missiles –Alaska

Anchorage (Alaska)

Detailed Description of the Collection

Guest book

“Guests of Battery B, 4th Missile Battalion, 43d Artillery, Site Summit, Fort Richardson, Alaska.”
Spiral-bound, with signatures dated 1960-1977.

Photographs

.1 – [portrait, John Minier]

.2 – [aerial of site]

.3 – [aerial of site]

.4 – [close-in aerial of radome at site]

.5 – [missile at site]

Ephemera

- Printout of color digital image, aerial of site

- Copy, disposition form, John Minier assumes command of Battery B, October 16, 1978

- Copy, certificate of training, John Minier, Nike Hercules Fire Unit Battery Control Officer

- Copy, Officer's Roster, 1st Battalion, 43d Air Defense Artillery, November 2, 1978

- Copy, directory of names, new units, addresses, assignments after site deactivation in 1979
- Clipping, "1/43d comes down," *The Pioneer*, June 15, 1979
- Newsletter, *The Pioneer*, August 3, 1979, including photograph with caption "Brigade says farewell" and article "Honor Battalion," both about site deactivation

Guide written: February 22, 2019