



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gateway
National Recreation Area

Park Headquarters
210 New York Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10305

718-354-4606 phone
718-354-4605 fax

Gateway News Release

Contact: Mike Thomas
Phone number: 732-872-5959
Date: September 15, 2008

Cold War Day to Highlight Fort Hancock's Nike Missile Era

The Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area will present an afternoon of activities to highlight the Cold War and the Nike missile era of Fort Hancock.

Beginning at noon on Sunday, September 21, National Park Service staff and volunteers will be conducting tours of the Fort Hancock Nike missile launch and radar sites. The Nike Missile launch site is located just north of the Sandy Hook Ranger Station. The radar site is one mile north of the launch site along Hartshorne Drive. Both sites will be open from noon to 4 p.m.

In addition to the site tours, there will be displays of US, North Vietnamese and Russian military equipment and weapons from the later years of the Cold War. Displays will center on the war in Vietnam and the 1980s Soviet war in Afghanistan.

Several other Sandy Hook sites will be open that day including Battery Potter, America's first disappearing gun battery built in the late 1800s, the Fort Hancock Museum, with exhibits on Sandy Hook's role in the defense of New York Harbor, and History House, a restored officer's home on Officer's Row.

The NJ Lighthouse Society will give tours of the Sandy Hook Lighthouse from noon until 4:30 p.m. The Sandy Hook Bird Observatory, home to New Jersey Audubon will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The park Visitor Center, in the old Spermaceti Cove Life-Saving Station, is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. For more information about this and other activities on Sandy Hook, visitors can call 732-872-5970. Information is also available at www.nps.gov/gate.

History

From the 1950s until the mid 1970s, Nike surface-to-air missiles, some with nuclear warheads, were stationed at Fort Hancock as part of the defense of the New York Metropolitan area. During the Cold War many large American cities were ringed by Nike sites to protect from a Soviet bomber attack. The land based Nike missile system was decommissioned in response to the 1974 SALT Treaty with the Soviet Union. Today the Fort Hancock site is among the most intact and best preserved in the United States.

---NPS---

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.