Cold War Era 1950-1975

Threat of foreign attack on U.S. soil shifts from naval-based to air-based during the Cold War. World War II coast artillery defenses on the west coast are replaced by Nike anti-aircraft missile systems utilizing nuclear warheads.



1950-1953 - Korean War

U.S. defenses are in a continual high state of readiness to protect against foreign aggression. New defense technologies are investigated and installed.

1952 - Nike System implemented

The Nike missile system becomes the most expensive, widespread, and longest-lived missile system deployed to date. Over 250 Nike sites installed in 30 states; the defense system serves for 25 years.

1954 - Sixth Army Air Defense Command headquartered at Fort Baker

Fort Baker commands 12 permanent Nike missile launch sites and support structures; including San Pablo Ridge, Rocky Ridge, Lake Chabot, Coyote Hills, Milagra Ridge, Fort Winfield Scott, Fort Funston, Fort Cronkhite, Fort Barry, Angel Island, and San Rafael.

1962 - Fort Mason designated surplus military property

1963-1975 - Vietnam War

Thousands of soldiers returning from combat out-process at the Presidio of San Francisco. Injured soldiers are flown into Crissy Field and treated at Letterman General Hospital and the new Letterman Army Medical Center.

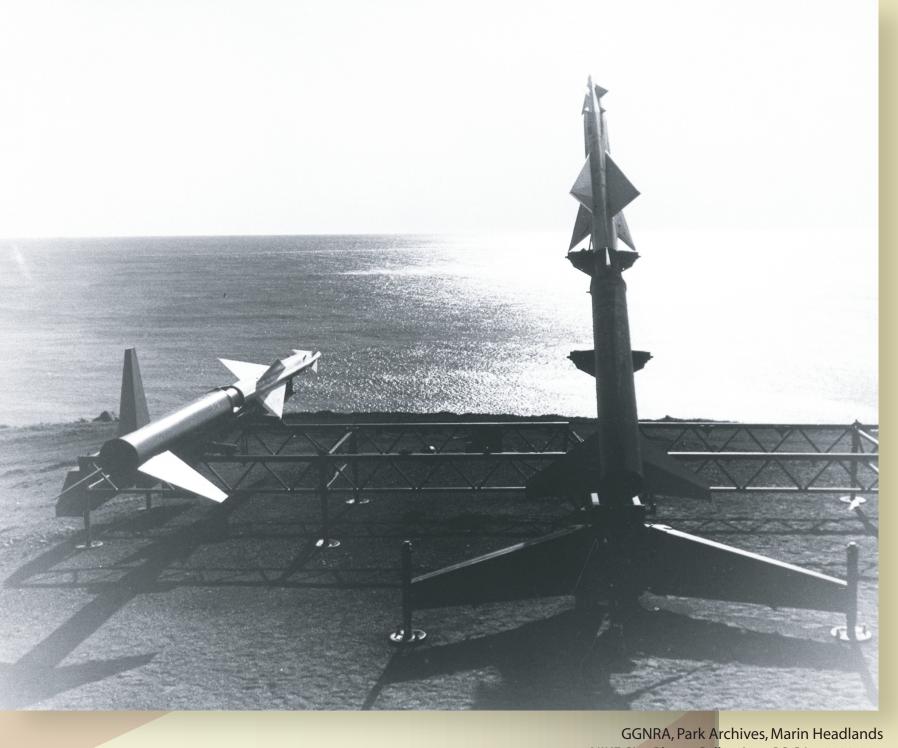
1968 - Letterman Army Medical Center constructed 1890s-era Letterman General Hospital is inadequate to manage needs of incoming Vietnam soldiers. A larger state-of-the-art hospital is constructed.

1972 - Letterman Army Institute of Research established

Conducts military-based research including jungle-based disease treatment, chemical warfare, and prosthetics.

1974 - Nike missile system declared obsolete

New Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles technology surpasses the altitude and speed of Nike missiles.



Fort Barry, California NIKE missiles of the 30th AAA Group 1955



Mechanix Illustrated-Cataloged,

1974 - Crissy Field closed to all aircraft



GGNRA, Park Archives, Bell Telephone Laboratories NIKE Hercules Photos, 1959 GOGA, 18441.014

1975 - Operation Babylift

Harmon Hall is used to house over 1,000 Vietnamese orphans airlifted into San Francisco from war-torn Vietnam. Children are cared for by soldiers and volunteers while arrangements are made for adoption.