



## 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.



GGNRA, Park Archives, PAM Negative Collection, GOGA 35256  
6th Army Transportation USAR, West End of Crissy Field 1954

### 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.

### 1974 - Crissy Field closed to all aircraft

### 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.



GGNRA, Park Archives, Marin Headlands  
NIKE Site Photo Collection, GOGA 40033.007  
Fort Barry, California NIKE missiles of the 30th AAA Group 1955



GGNRA, Park Archives,  
Mechanix Illustrated, Cataloged,  
GOGA 18912



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