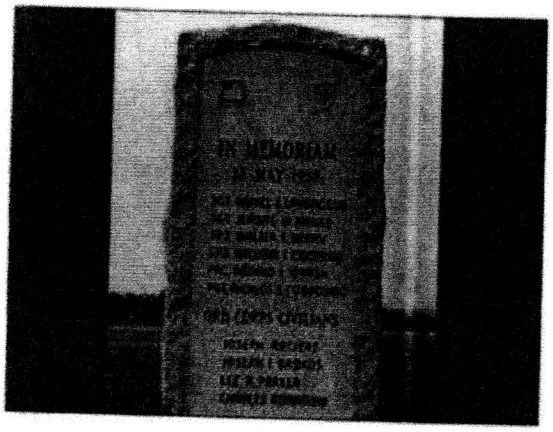
Nike Battery NY-53
Middletown, NJ



Located in the Chapel Hill section of Middletown Township, Nike Battery NY-53 inadvertently became the subject of worldwide media attention during 1958. On May 22nd of that year, the accidental explosion of several Nike Ajax missiles at the site claimed the lives of ten Army and civilian ordnance personnel, caused considerable damage to the site and even greater damage to the Army's reputation. The incident was one of the worst missile related disasters of the Cold War era.

Although the damage to the site was repaired, plans to convert it to operate with Nike Hercules missiles were scrapped. Operation of the site was transferred to the New Jersey Army National Guard during 1960. It remained operational until 1963. A stone memorial honoring the ten persons killed in the 1958 tragedy was moved to nearby Fort Hancock on the Sandy Hook peninsula where it can be seen today.

Location
Launcher Area:
Middletown
(Monmouth County), NJ
Control Area:
Middletown
(Monmouth County), NJ

Dates of Operation
1955-1963

Weapons Systems & Missile Load
Nike Ajax / 30
Nike Hercules / 0

Missile Magazines
3 Magazines.
1 type "B" and 2 type "C".

Radar Types
ACQR

Unit Information
Army -
B/526th (1957-1958)
B/4/71st (1958-1960)

National Guard -
C/1/254th (1960-1963)

Present Status
The launcher area, site of the disastrous 1958 explosions, has been demolished. The remains o the control area are believed to be located on property belonging to the adjacent U.S. Naval Weapons Station Earle.

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