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(U) White Sands Missile Range

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From Intellipedia

For the geography and ecology of the WSMR area, see White Sands, New Mexico and Basin and Range Province. Template:Infobox military installation

White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) is a United States Army rocket range of almost {{convert/numdisp|3200 sq mi (

{{#ifexpr:(3200)*2589988.110336/1000000=0|0|{{rnd/bExpression error: Unexpected < operator.|Expression error: Unexpected < operator.|(Expression error: Unexpected < operator.|Expression error: Unexpected < operator. }} {km²}} in parts of five counties in southern New Mexico. The largest military installation in the United States, WSMR and the Template:Convert/acre McGregor Range Complex at Fort Bliss to the south (southeast Tularosa Basin and on Otero Mesa^[1]) are contiguous areas for military testing. Template:R White Sands is the site of the first atomic bomb test.

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File:Trinity Test Fireball
16ms.jpg

The site of the 1945 Trinity explosion became part of WSMR.

National Historic Landmarks

Designated historic sites on WSMR land include:

- Trinity Site: Selected in November 1944 for the Trinity (nuclear test) detonated on 16 July 1945Template:R (National Historic Landmark district on 21 December 1965,^{[2][3]} NRHP on 15 October 1966).^[4]
- White Sands V-2 Launching Site: A V-2 static test firing was 15 March 1946, and the 1st US V-2 launch was 16 April 1946 (landmark designation 3 October 1985).^{[5][6]}

Current operations

The White Sands Test Center headquartered at the WSMR "Post Area" (<http://www.wsmr.army.mil/gar/Pages/PhoneBook.aspx>) has branches for Manned Tactical Systems & Electromagnetic Radiation and conducts missile testing and range recovery operations.^[7] Other operations on WSMR land include:

- The Launch Abort Flight Test Complex for the Orion Project
- White Sands Launch Complex 37, built for Nike Hercules tests
- White Sands Launch Complex 38, built for Nike Zeus tests with Launch Control Building now used for Patriot missile firings
- "WSMR Main Post", which includes several smaller areas such as the housing area, golf course, "Navy Area", and "Technical Area"^[8] (a recreational shooting range just inside the "El Paso gate" on the south is outside of the Post Area.)
 - WSMR Museum tours and exhibits, which include V-2 rocket #FZ04/20919 returned in May 2004 after restoration.
 - White Sands Hall of Fame, which inducts members such as the 1st range commander (1945 - 1947), Col. Harold Turner^{Template:Disambiguation needed}, in 1980.^[9]
 - 1972 DoD Centers for Countermeasures (CCM), which evaluate precision guided munitions and other devices in electronic counter- and counter-countermeasures environments.^[10]
- 1963 NASA White Sands Test Facility's ground station for Tracking and Data Relay Satellites and the SDO ground station with 2 ^{Template:Convert/LoffAonDbSon} antennas.
- The North Oscura Peak facility of the AFRL Directed Energy Directorate

Chronology

- 1930: Robert Goddard began rocket testing in New Mexico.
- 1941-04-13: The US' WWII preparations established^{Template:R} the Army Air Base, Alamogordo:^[11] 1942 Biggs Army Airfield construction began near El Paso (1947 Biggs AFB, 1973 Biggs AAF)--the region's nearby Deming AAFld (14 Dec 1946), Ft Sumner AAFld (6 Mar), and South Aux Fid #1 (4 Apr) transferred to "Army Div Engrs" in 1946.^{Template:R}
- 1940s: When the range was formed, ranchers' land was leased and, in the 1970s, taken permanently to expand the area available for testing.^[12]

USAAF ranges

- 1941-12: Alamogordo Bombing and Gunnery Range established near the "West Texas Bombardier Triangle".
- 1941-12: Executive Order No. 9029^{Template:R} canceled grazing leases on the newly established Alamogordo Bombing and Gunnery Range.
- 1942-07: Goddard's rocket research group moved from Roswell, New Mexico, to Annapolis, Maryland.
- 1944-02: War Department and the Corps of Engineers' Ordnance Department teams looked for a US missile test site.^[13]
- 1945-07-13: McDonald Ranch House, Manhattan Project location for the final assembly of the prototype Fat Man plutonium bomb.
- 1945-07-16: Trinity test of the plutonium bomb, the first nuclear weapon tested in the world.

White Sands Proving Ground

For additional events (e.g., USAF launches) at sites not on WSPG but that later became part of WSMR, see Air Force Missile Development Center.

- 1945-02-20: The Secretary of War approved establishment of WSPG.^[14]^{Template:Rp}^{Template:R}
- 1945-04-01: The 1st Private F launch^[15] was at WSPG. (Not Fort Bliss's Antiaircraft and Guided Missile Center, which was established 6 July 1946.)^[16]

- 1945-06-25: WSPG construction began with drilling of water wells.Template:R
- 1945-07: 1st of 300 railroad cars of German V-2 components began to arrive at Las Cruces, New Mexico.^[14]Template:Rp
- 1945-09: The blockhouse at Army Launch Area 1 (later Launch Complex 33) was completed.Template:R
- 1945-09-16: 1st WAC Corporal testTemplate:Where firing.^[14]Template:Rp
- 1945-11: GE contractors began to identify, sort, and reassemble V-2 components in Building 1538 (Assembly Building 1). (<https://books.google.com/books?id=4Pz7CijlZnAC&lpg=PA108&ots=BwuOLHWfQb&dq=1st%20guided%20missile%20battalion&pg=PA84#v=snippet&q=white%20sands&f=false>)
- 1946: 35 of the Operation Paperclip scientists from Germany were working at WSPG.^[17]
- 1946-05-26: The 4th U.S. V-2 launch was tracked by "twoTemplate:Where AN/MPQ-2 stations".^[18]
- 1946 summer: New WSPG quarters were completed and the Medical Detachment and 3 batteries moved from Ft Bliss.^[19]
- 1946-09: 1st static firing of a Nike missile was at WSPG.^[20]

New Mexico Joint Guided Missile Test Range

- 1947 (late):^[21] A merging of military areas (e.g., former USAAF bombing range and the smaller WSPG) established the "New Mexico Joint Guided Missile Test Range".^[22]
- 1947-11-14: The USAF's **Alamogordo Guided Missile Test Base** (AGMTB) on the range had its 1st GAPA missile launch (39th for GAPA and 1st with a ramjet).^[23]
- 1948-07: USAF Project MX-774 commenced with the first RTV-A-2 Hiroc launch (from Launch Complex 33)^[24]
- 1949-03: Holloman's 2754th Air Force Base unit gained "control of [the WSPG] support airfield, **Condron Field**...from Biggs Army Air Field at Fort Bliss."Template:R
- 1949: German scientists transferred from New Mexico to Alabama (Dr. Ernst Steinhoff transferred from WSPG to Holloman's Air Development Center.) (<http://www.wsmr-history.org/HallOfFame39.htm>)
- 1949-07: The range's Four Bits Peak Instrumentation Annex was assigned to the AFB (disposed on 30 September 1960).Template:R
- 1951-07: The AGMTB became a sub-base of Florida's Air Force Missile Test Center until 31 August 1952.^[25]
- 1951-08-22: **Broomstick Scientists** in a unit of the 9393 Technical Service Unit conducted their 1st launch: the "TF-1" V-2 rocket.^{[26][27]} (*Broomstick Sweepings* publication ended after a 22 January 1952 general order transferred "1st Ord. GMS Bn." soldiers to Detachment No. 1, Station Complement.)^[28]
- 1952-05: An additionalTemplate:Where { {convert/numdisp|40x117 mi (

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- 1952 (mid): The joint range of more than Template:Convert/acre was 2nd in area to the Eglin AFB range (the Edwards AFB range was 3rd.)Template:R
- 1952-11: The range's Red Butte Instrumentation Annex was assigned to Holloman AFB (disposed on 22 November 1963).Template:R
- 1953-06: USS Desert Ship (LLS-1) (Launch Complex 35) was built to test the Navy RIM-8 Talos

- 1957-02: The 9393rd Technical Unit, Ordnance, became the U.S. Army Garrison.^[30]
- 1957-03-13: Nike Hercules satisfactory launch from LC37.^[31]

White Sands Missile Range

- 1958-05-01: The test range was designated "White Sands Missile Range".Template:R
- 1958-09-02: The Gold Hill Instrumentation Annex was assigned to Holloman AFB (disposed on 30 September 1960).Template:R
- 1958-10: Zeus Acquisition Radar site construction at the planned Launch Complex 38 began^[32] near an airstrip.^[33]
- Template:C.: The long-range GE AN/FPS-17 Fixed Ground Radar at the Laredo Test Site tracked its 1st WSMR rocket.
- 1959: Shavetail rocket tested.Template:Where
- 1959: An Iconorama large screen display as used for Pentagon C² was installed at WSMR.^[34]
- 1963: President Kennedy visited for the MEWS (Missile Exercise White Sands).^[35]
- 1962-03: Annual Service Practice was being conducted for Redstone missile crews.^[36]
- 1963-03: Site preparation began for the Multi-function Array Radar.^[37]
- 1963: Apollo launch escape system tests with the Little Joe II began at White Sands Launch Complex 36 (ended 1966).^[38]
- 1963-11: The Loma (assigned December 1952), Rose Park (5 February 1950), & Twin Buttes (December 1949) instrumentation annexes transferred from Holloman AFB to the Army.^[39]
- 1964-07-08: The 1st "successful Athena/ABRES test missile [was] fired from Utah into WSMR".^[40]
- 1965-11: 1st Sprint missile launch [1] (<http://www.nuclearabms.info/Sprint.html>)
- 1967: Operation Understanding civic leaders observed their local Nike crews perform Short Notice Annual Practice launches.^[41]
- 1967-10-21: Public Law 90-110 authorized \$4,781,000 for WSMR construction.^[42]
- 1972: WSMR had 3 RCA AN/FPS-16 Instrumentation Radars^[43]
- 1983 thru 30 September 1993 - WSMR hosted the Simtel collection, the largest collection of free software and freeware available to the public on the ARPANET and Internet. It began as a copy of an MIT collection of CP/M software, and expanded to collect free software for other operating systems as well.^{[44][45]}
- 1991 (late): Convair QF-106 Delta Dart drones based at Holloman AFB began operating as Full-Scale Aerial Targets over WSMR.^[citation needed]
- 1993-08-18: The 1st McDonnell Douglas DC-X flight was from the White Sands Space Harbor
- 2004: AIAA named the WSPG a Historic Aerospace Site. (<http://www.aiaa.org/SecondaryTwoColumn.aspx?id=5544>)^[46]
- 2007-11-14: Launch Complex 32 groundbreaking for the Orion Abort Test Booster.^{[47][48]}
- 2011: A point in the Post Area was designated "White Sands Missile Range" in the USGS's Geographic Names Information System.^[49]

File:STS-3 landing.jpg
1982 Space Shuttle *Columbia*
landing at Northrop Strip

Template:External media

See also



Template:Commons category

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