



Charlie Battery 3rd Missile Battalion 71st Artillery

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WINNING THE PEACE WITH PEACE THROUGH  
VIGILANCE • STRENGTH • HONOR • RESOLVE

## The Rise and Fall of ARADCOM

by Col. Woolf Gross U.S. Army Ret.

**F**or those who don't know, or don't remember, ARADCOM (Army Air Defense Command) was the acronym for the Nike Guided Missile Antiaircraft Command in the United States.

The following article was taken from "On Point" Magazine, the quarterly journal published by the Army Historical Foundation in Virginia, and is reprinted with generous and grateful permission. Colonel Gross was primarily a field artillery officer, however, he did command a Nike Battery in defense of Travis Air Force Base, Fairfield, south of Sacramento, California.

This is a very interesting overview of the air defense weaponry of the U.S. Army, however, the article begins with a brief discussion of the strategic use of the tactics of aerial bombing of cities, civilians, as well as troops in the field. And of course when aircraft fly over to inflict harm, the other side tries to shoot them down.

It is especially good to see some discussion of the role of the Nike Guided Missile System as part of a primary Cold War weapon deterrent. And it was an even more important deterrent when it was used in the defense of Western Europe, primarily in what was then, West Germany.

Depending on the location of the Missile Base, they were 3-10 minutes by air from the Warsaw Pact Border. Missile sites were a 24/7/365 duty station. Crews were always "Ready Room" available both in the IFC and in the Launching Area. And when on an alert, the generators were running in all three Launching Area Sections ready for immediate launch, if necessary.

In Germany these Missile sites were dispersed throughout the county side. They were mostly isolated and usually some distance from any Kaserne or Barracks of any kind. Charlie Battery base was at least 30 plus kilometers from Wharton Barracks in Heilbronn, Baden-Württemberg.

But this isolation did bring everyone closer together, and also encouraged more interaction with the local people of our Neighborhood. It took time to get to know each other, however, the placement of a base like Charlie Battery initially brought much anger and resentment, because that meant that the area could become a target and that made them quite nervous. The barracks area was burned down twice during construction. But over time this interaction resulted in trust and lasting friendships, both among the GI's, as well as with the local people. But for the most part, the Cold War and the Nike Missile contribution has been forgotten.

Finally for those interested in the history of America, On Point is an excellent source, because the history of the U.S. Army is inextricably integrated with America's history. The On Point Journal is an excellent source, and I might say, enjoyable reading as well. The works are scholarly and well written.

The final pages of this document provide the information on becoming a member, with the basic membership being a very good value. All are encouraged to familiarize yourselves with the range of options.



Please Note:

As a personal observation - On Page 4 of this document (page 39 of On Point) lower Right Photo F shows, and corresponding caption reads, as follows:

"...Integrated Fire Control area shows site's target acquisition radar in the foreground and target tracking radar in the background."

To be accurate it should read:

"...Integrated Fire Control area shows site's target acquisition radar in the foreground and target tracking radar and missile tracking radar in the background."

# THE FLIGHT OF THE OZZLEFINCH: THE RISE AND FALL OF ARADCOM

By Colonel Woolf Gross, USA-Ret.

While significantly contributing to the chaos and destruction wrought on Europe and Japan during World War II, strategic bombing, the delivery of massive destruction over long distances from above, which ultimately became one of the hallmarks of that conflict, was a comparative latecomer. Neither the Imperial Japanese Air Force nor the German *Luftwaffe* had the “legs” necessary to deliver intercontinental ordnance loads. Indeed, despite the havoc perpetrated on London and other English cities, the *Luftwaffe*’s bombing campaign was more tactical than strategic. Mounted mostly from occupied France, the *Luftwaffe* conducted the campaign with aircraft that had limited range and payloads.

Within the Axis powers, only Japan had aircraft carriers that permitted it to “simulate” strategic bombing, and few would argue that the attack on Pearl Harbor was not strategic (defined as delivery of massive loads of ordnance over extended distances). Even the Allies fell short of the classic definition of strategic despite the pounding unleashed on the German homeland by the U.S. Army Air Forces’ B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators, and the Royal Air Force’s Lancasters. True strategic bombing began comparatively late in the war with the advent of the B-29 Superfortress, when Japan was no longer able to field adequate ground-based anti-air systems.

It was that very brief interlude in the late 1940s and early 1950s which changed the air-ground equation—and necessarily the ground-based air defense environment—and gave rise to America’s “longest war,” albeit a “cold” one. The hallmark of the Cold War was, of course, that erstwhile allies became potential enemies and, most curiously, old enemies became allies. Historians like to play the date game: World War I had its origin in the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, while World War II began with Nazi Germany’s invasion of Poland. The Cold War perhaps dates itself from the Berlin blockade and the responding allied airlift, and ended definitively with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Symmetry? During that almost four-decade period, the threat of strategic bombing—and defense against it—became a yardstick.

Parentetical within the initial stages of the Cold War was the Korean War that was largely

a replay of World War II with respect to its technologies. Fought entirely on the geography of the Korean peninsula, it was never cogent to the multi-continent grasp of the Cold War. Its mention in the context of continental U.S. air defense is of some significance, however, since the Department of the Army activated Army Antiaircraft Command (ARAACOM) on 29 June 1950, four days after North Korean forces crossed the 38th parallel and invaded South Korea.

Long-range planners at the nascent Department of Defense early in the Cold War reasoned that strategic bombing would be a feature if the Cold War suddenly turned hot. Air defense, including its ground-based aspects, became an early feature of overall defense planning. The initial stages of implementation of the ground-based homeland Army air defense plan were based upon resurrection of the 90mm and 120mm anti-aircraft (AA) guns of the World War II era. Toward the end of the five-year period (1950 to 1955) of ARAACOM’s existence, the newly developed and more compact M51 Skysweeper 75mm AA gun had entered service.

None of these guns, however, possessed the range necessary to successfully engage Soviet bombers, such as the Tu-4 Bison, a reverse engineered copy of the American B-29, and the Tu-95 Bear, a four-engine turboprop behemoth still in service with the Russian Air Force. Though all the indicated cannon weapons were radar-directed, their electronics were all based upon vacuum-tube technology. The mean time between failures of vacuum tubes was significant. While the 90 and 120mm gun radars were “off-chassis,” the Skysweeper, with its all-in-one, on-equipment radar set was particularly vulnerable to vacuum-tube failure. The vibration caused by its rapid-fire, high-velocity gun was particularly inimical to effective functioning of the system.

Implementation of the National Security Act of 1947, and

the 1949 amendments that established the Department of Defense (DoD), constituted the matrix for national security planning from then on. Recall that the decade which ensued presented multiple challenges to the nascent Defense Department including (but not limited to) demobilizing the defense establishment remnants from World War II while continuing with the occupation of a shattered Germany and Japan, beginning to focus on the specter of an increasingly hostile Soviet former ally, dealing with a full-scale war on the Korean peninsula, and facing the prospect of planning for the defense of the homeland. The joint vehicle that DoD created to plan and develop the air defense aspects of protecting the homeland was the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD), primarily a function of the new stand-alone U.S. Air Force. CONAD was later renamed the North American Air Defense Command in 1957 (NORAD); in 1981 it became the North American Aerospace Defense Command. The Army was assigned responsibility for ground-based air defense operations under the overall aegis of CONAD/NORAD.

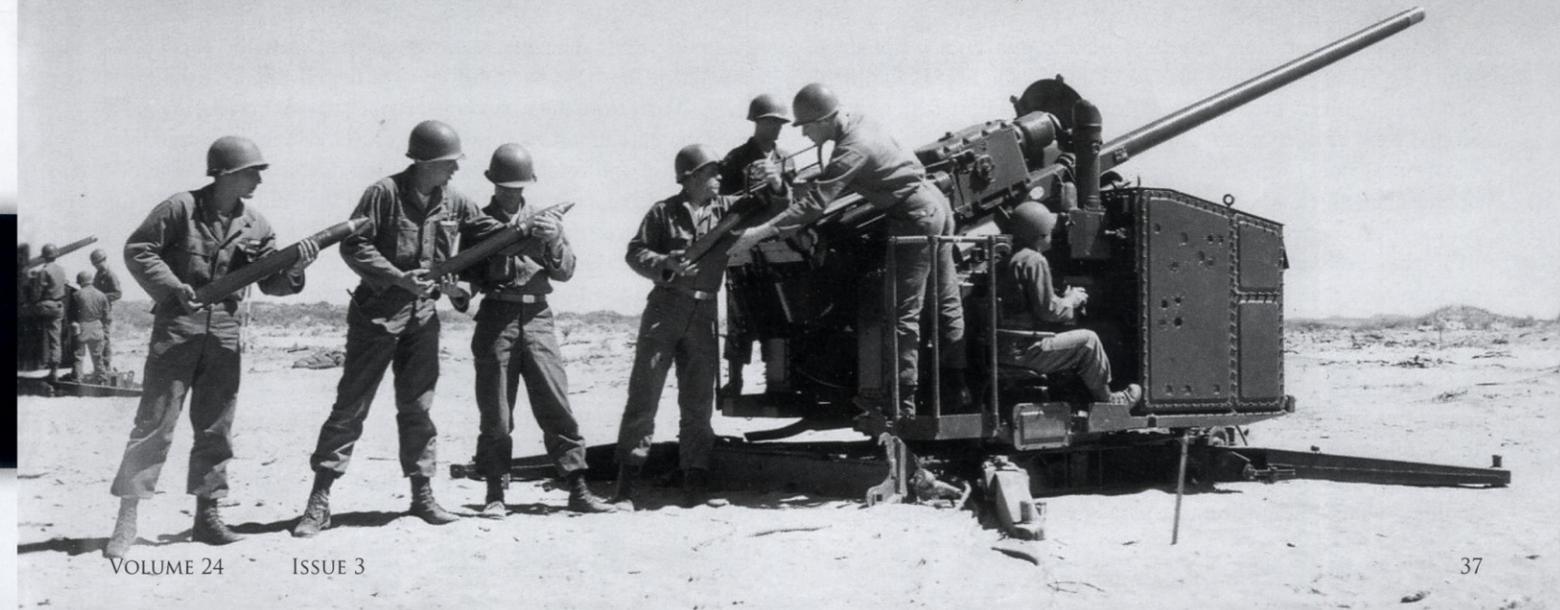
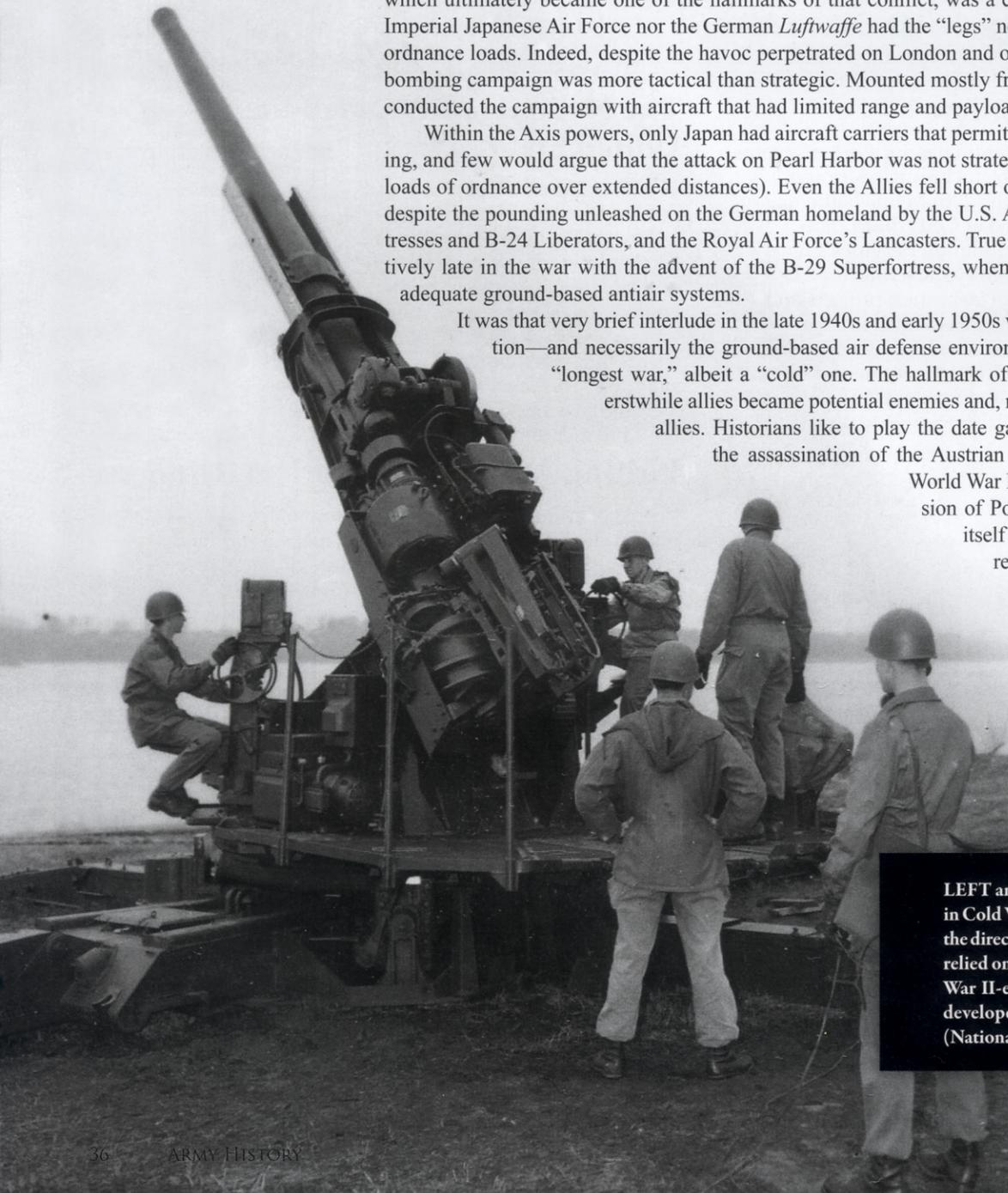
In reality, the AA gun-based ARAACOM was never meant to be anything but a stopgap measure until more advanced air defense weapon systems became available. As far back as the late 1940s, Army (and DoD) research and development was hard at work designing surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) that would overcome the range limitations and destructive power of guns. With this future capability plainly on the horizon, provisioning ARAACOM was never accorded a high priority. The

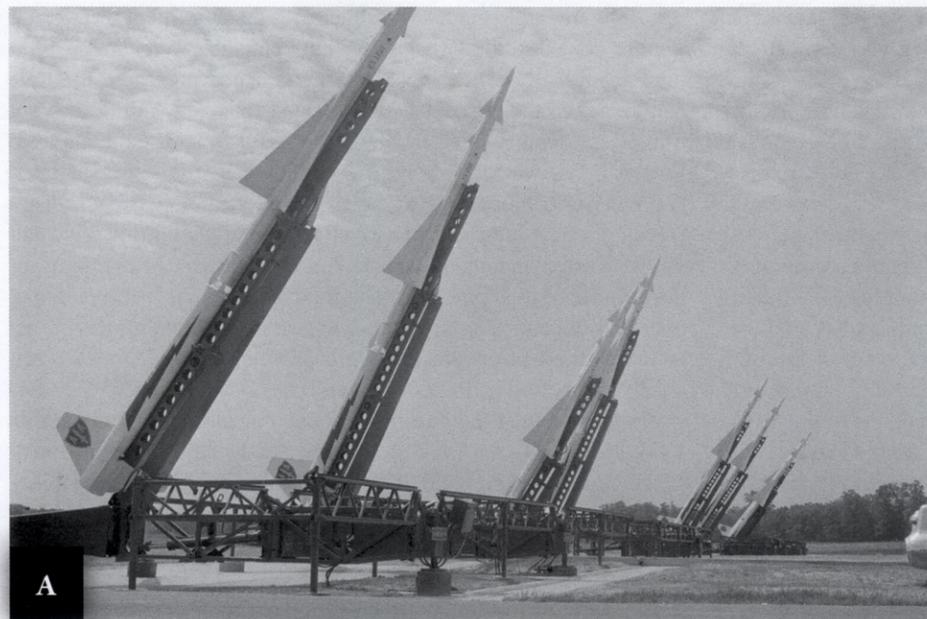
90mm and 120mm guns left over from World War II, some of which were still *in situ*—largely in what had been installations of the old Coast Artillery from which Antiaircraft Artillery (AAA) traced its lineage—were refurbished and returned to service. These installations varied widely with respect

**RIGHT:** The Army Air Defense Command (ARADCOM) shoulder sleeve insignia was approved by the Army on 10 April 1958 and worn until the inactivation of ARADCOM in 1975. (Insignia courtesy of Dave Kaufman)



**LEFT and RIGHT:** The Army’s early efforts in Cold War ground-based air defense, under the direction of Army Antiaircraft Command, relied on anti-aircraft guns, such as the World War II-era 120mm gun (left) and the newly developed, rapid-firing 75mm Skysweeper. (National Archives)





to facilities and creature comforts for the gun crews. For those with long memories, places like Fort Funston and Fort Baker in the San Francisco Bay area and Fort Hamilton and Fort Totten in and around New York come to mind.

Deployment of the new Skysweeper 75mm guns posed more unique challenges. A weapon system more appropriate for the protection of Army field installations and forces, they were something of a fish out of water for the planners of ARAACOM. One logical mission area that was pursued was point defense of limited geography but deemed vital military facilities, such as airbases and transportation choke points. An example was the establishment of the point defense of Travis Air Force Base, California, as an outlier of the San Francisco Bay defense. Assigned this mission was the 436th AAA Battalion with its brand-new (but miscast) Skysweepers. The battalion headquarters and indeed the line battery administrative adjuncts were assigned permanent buildings as ten-

ant units at Travis. The guns themselves were scattered outside the perimeter of the base in primitive sites leased largely from local farmers. Apart from the weapon itself, the sites comprised the most limited creature comforts for the gun crews, which were deployed from on-base and rotated on week-to-ten-day schedules. The operation exuded claustrophobic monotony that did very little for ARAACOM's reenlistment rate.

The rough-and-ready shabbiness of ARAACOM began to change in 1954 with the first deployment of the Nike-Ajax SAM system. As was probably fitting and proper, the first Nike site came on line in May of that year as part of the Washington Defense Area protecting the nation's capital. On 21 March 1957, with air defense rapidly becoming the province of the SAM, ARAACOM was redesignated as Army Air Defense Command (ARADCOM), with Lieutenant General Stanley R. Michelsen, the former commander of ARAACOM, assuming command of ARADCOM.

A. The first Nike-Ajax missile sites were activated around the Washington Defense Area beginning in May 1954. This photograph shows Nike-Ajax missiles at the W-64 site in Lorton, Virginia. (Library of Congress)

B. Army personnel provide a group of Republic of China Army officers a VIP tour of the T-53 Nike site in Potero Hills, California, in April 1958. The author, at the time a first lieutenant, is shown at center. (Author's collection)

C. Four Nike-Ajax missiles are shown in the raised on their launchers at the PH-15 site in Newportville, Pennsylvania, a site in the Philadelphia Defense Area, 20 October 1959. (National Archives)

D. Unlike the Nike-Ajax missile, which was armed with three conventional warheads, the more powerful Nike-Hercules, which entered service in 1958, could carry either a conventional or nuclear warhead. This Nike-Hercules is shown at the W-94 site in Gaithersburg, Maryland, in 1974. (Library of Congress)

E. First Lieutenant Woolf Gross leads Battery D, 1st Missile Battalion, 61st Artillery, during the dedication of the Rio Vista site in April 1959. This site was one of four batteries protecting Travis Air Force Base in California. (Author's collection)

F. A 10 January 1962 photograph of the T-10 (Elmira, California) site's Integrated Fire Control area shows the site's target acquisition radar in the foreground and target tracking radar in the background. (National Archives)

Nike-Ajax was the first iteration of what was planned to be a family of SAMs that would grow as rapidly as developing technology would permit. In theory, the command-guided Nike system was ground-transportable—all of its components could be mounted on trailers. In practice, however the system was too cumbersome and delicate to be viable on anything other than fixed installations that were both extensive and expensive. The Army organized Nike-equipped units into battalions of three or four firing batteries, and each battery comprised a single fire unit. Though there were variances, a Nike line battery consisted of two geographically separate entities some one to two miles apart, but requiring line-of-sight between the two. The two installations—designated respectively as an Integrated Fire Control (IFC) area and a Launch Control (LC) area—were the tactical heart of the system. On the ground, each firing battery included an administrative and support facility (barracks, mess hall, battery headquarters, motor pool, etc.), often within the same perimeter as the IFC area.

The standard Nike site design encompassed commercially built cinder block, single-story buildings with private barracks rooms for battery officers and senior noncommissioned officers

and open bays for junior enlisted personnel. Most had limited athletic facilities, well-equipped dayrooms, and capable kitchens—not quite “all the comforts of home,” but far better than the rudimentary layouts of the scattered AA gun sites they replaced. The launch control areas encompassed two or three hardened underground missile storage bunkers, with each serving three or four missile launchers with auxiliary rails for reloads. Underground and surface facilities were connected by massive hydraulic elevators to move ready missiles from storage to launch positions. The LC areas were also featured well-equipped missile assembly buildings that accommodated preparation and fueling of the missiles that were shipped to the sites knocked-down in hermetically sealed shipping containers.

Due to variability in the funding of the commercial construction of Nike sites from one geographical area to another, ARADCOM’s grand plan for the air defense of CONUS suffered occasional shortfalls. Some examples of this problem were the growing pains of the Nike defense of Travis AFB. Planned as a four-battery battalion, it initially ran out of funding with only “three-and-a-half” Nike sites built commercially. The “half site” consisted of a fully operable fire

control and administrative area, but no launcher facility. The battalion went operational with three firing batteries. Higher headquarters, however, said, “not good enough” and ordered the battalion to “build a do-it-yourself launch control facility.”

Battalion Headquarters (initially the 436th AAA Missile Battalion, later 1st Battalion, 61st Artillery, after the reversion to the Army regimental system) thereupon made a silk purse out of a sow’s ear: it drafted the most junior battery executive officer from among the fully operational batteries to command the nascent Battery D and levied the rest of the battalion for the remaining personnel. This understrength cadre thus assumed a dual mission: train as air defenders while functioning as a military construction unit. The designated launcher platoon leader (a warrant officer since no commissioned officer was available) turned out to be a retread from an engineer construction battalion. He became the construction boss. Everybody from battery commander to motor pool mechanic became a part-time construction hand. Heavy equipment was borrowed from the Travis AFB base engineer and from the nearby Rio Vista Army Depot. Long story short: Battery D became fully operational with an above-ground launch control area in approximately ninety days.

It is not clear from the available archives whether the Travis AFB predicament with its truncated Battery D was unique. However, what is clear is that the short funding situation was fairly widespread. How other defense areas responded to the budgetary shortfalls seems not to be clearly documented.

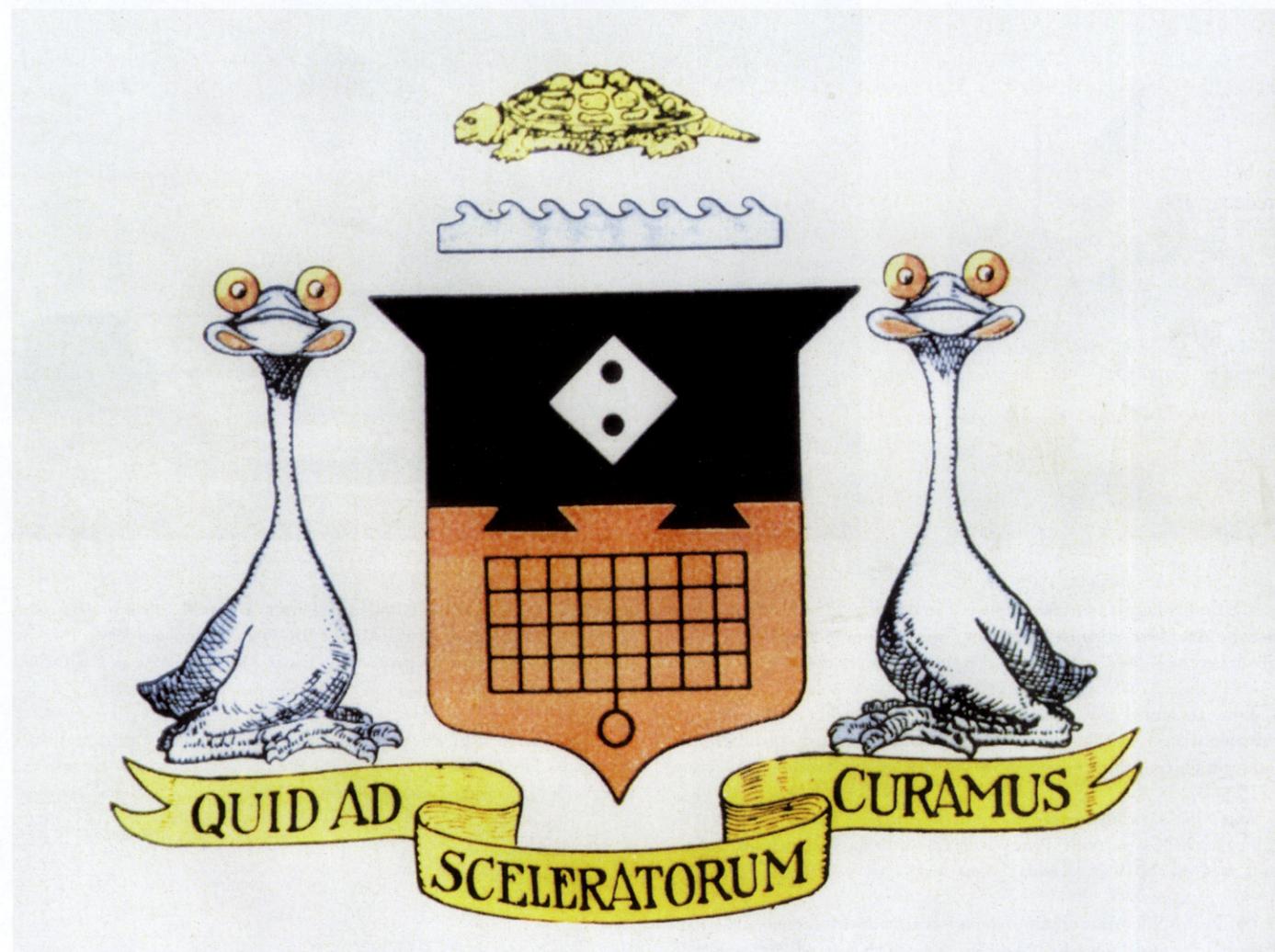
Tactically speaking, Nike-Ajax constituted a giant step toward matching the projected Soviet long-range bombing capability beyond the inadequate cannon equipment of the ARAACOM predecessor. The first-generation Nike SAM still had major shortcomings technologically, the major flaw being its continued dependence on vacuum tubes. Nike’s IFC system comprised some 500 vacuum tubes, each with a mean time between failures of about fifty hours. When in operation, the Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) complement of two warrant officer technicians and several enlisted specialists spent all their time frenziedly replacing

vacuum tubes to keep the system ready to fire if needed.

In recognition of these technological shortcomings as much as anything else, the Ajax variant had perhaps the shortest system half-life of any major U.S. Army weapon of record. In June 1958, the first Nike-Hercules system became operational in the Chicago Defense Area. IFC upgrades were mostly refinements of the Ajax predecessor, but the three-radar command guidance concept remained the same. The major improvements were in the missile itself: a cluster of four solid fuel booster rockets (versus a single booster for the Ajax) providing the initial propulsion for the much larger missile, a significantly increased intercept range for the missile itself, and reduced time to reach a target. In addition, the cumbersome three-chemical propellant cocktail used on the Ajax sustainer motor was replaced with a safer and more efficient solid propellant sustainer motor on the Hercules variant. The missile storage and launch facilities remained largely the same and served as a testament to the forethought of the system designers. A very major system improvement was the limited capability to intercept ballistic missiles of the period.

Nike-Ajax missiles were designed to shoot down enemy aircraft using high explosive fragmentation warheads that destroyed the intended target with a near-miss within a circular probable error. Nike-Ajax carried three warheads—one in the nose, one in the missile’s mid-section, and one aft—to better guarantee a kill. Detonation of the warheads was via a command from the missile tracking radar. While the Nike-Ajax carried only conventional warheads, Nike-Hercules could be armed with either a conventional or a nuclear warhead. Use of a nuclear warhead gave the Nike-Hercules the capability of taking out whole formations of enemy bombers, not just individual aircraft with a conventional one. The Hercules carried three different versions of the W31 warhead with yields of two, twenty, and forty kilotons.

Improvements in the fire control system were incremental and mostly internal. The most visible modification was the enclosure of the two tracking radar antennas. In the Ajax configuration, the tracking antennas were essentially open to the weather. The cor-



The Oozlefinch is a mythical bird that originally was the official mascot of the now-defunct Coast Artillery Corps, later bequeathed to ARADCOM. Both the Air Defense School at Fort Bliss, Texas, and the units of ARADCOM adopted the coat of arms above as emblematic of their respective missions. It is described as a bird that always flew backwards. (Author’s collection)

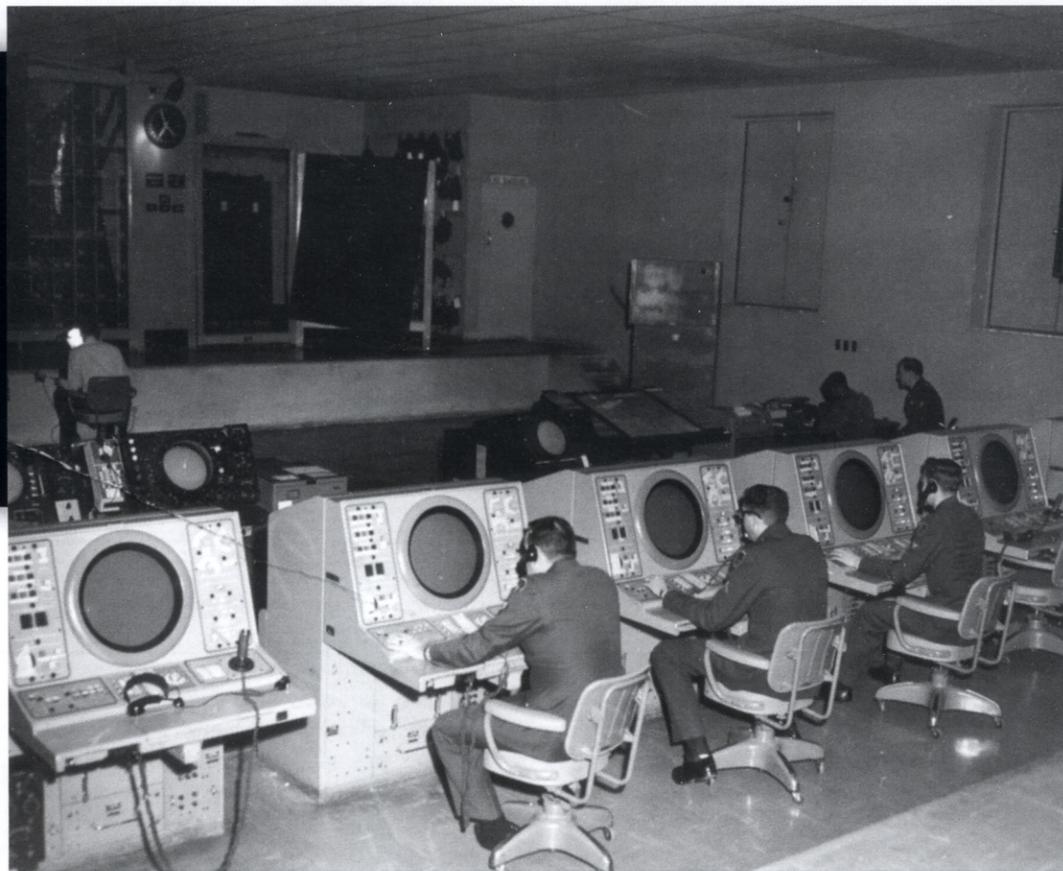


## GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS OF ARADCOM DEFENSE AREAS

Anchorage, AK  
Boston, MA  
Cincinnati/Dayton, OH  
Detroit, MI  
Fairbanks, AK  
Hartford CT  
Lincoln AFB, NE  
Milwaukee, WI  
Niagara Falls/Buffalo, NY  
Offutt AFB, NE  
Providence, RI/MA  
San Francisco, CA  
Travis AFB, CA  
National Capital, MD/VA

Barksdale, LA  
Bridgeport, CT  
Cleveland, OH  
Dyess AFB, TX  
Fairchild AFB, WA  
Homestead/Miami, FL  
Loring AFB, ME  
Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN  
Norfolk, VA  
Philadelphia, PA/NJ  
Robbins AFB, GA  
Schilling AFB, KS  
Turner AFB, GA  
Thule, Greenland

Bergstrom AFB, TX  
Chicago/Gary, IN/IL  
Dallas/Ft Worth, TX  
Ellsworth AFB, SD  
Hanford, WA  
Kansas City, KS/MO  
Los Angeles, CA  
New York, NY  
Oahu, HI  
Pittsburgh, PA  
St Louis, MO  
Seattle, WA  
Walker AFB, NM



Soldiers monitor radar scopes in the operations room at Site PI 70 located at Oakdale Army Air Defense Base outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 12 February 1962. (National Archives)

responding Hercules antennas were enclosed in weather-resistant housings that significantly extended time between failures on the antenna mounts. The upgraded Hercules acquisition radar—a rotating tub-like contraption—remained the same, though there were fairly significant internal electronic improvements that extended the range of target identification.

Life on a Nike site posed some unique problems with the burden falling squarely on the officiating battery commander. Site isolation, especially isolation from centralized Army facilities, largely obviated participation in “normal” extracurricular activities, e.g., athletic teams and facilities, post exchanges, movie theatres, etc. Boredom was a constant problem. Repetitive training for a narrow, singular mission eventually got on many soldiers’ nerves and occasionally led to disciplinary problems. Acquisition and tracking of ubiquitous commercial aircraft provided a modicum of training realism for the radar operators, but this rapidly became predictable and thus monotonous. The units lived from one unannounced readiness inspection to another and occasionally suffered due to the technological “crankiness” of the vital vacuum tubes.

Each battery underwent annual service practice (ASP) at White Sands’ McGregor Missile Range in New Mexico. The excitement of actual live missile firings was, however, somewhat diluted since the activity involved the use of equipment other than the fire unit’s own hardware. Firing batteries normally took great care to service and preserve their TO&E equipment. On the other hand, Nike equipment dedicated to service practice range firing was serviced between firings by well-qualified personnel assigned to McGregor Range who had less sense of possession than did the visitors with respect to their own “front line” equipage. A later modification of the ASP requirement—the so-called short-notice annual firing, or

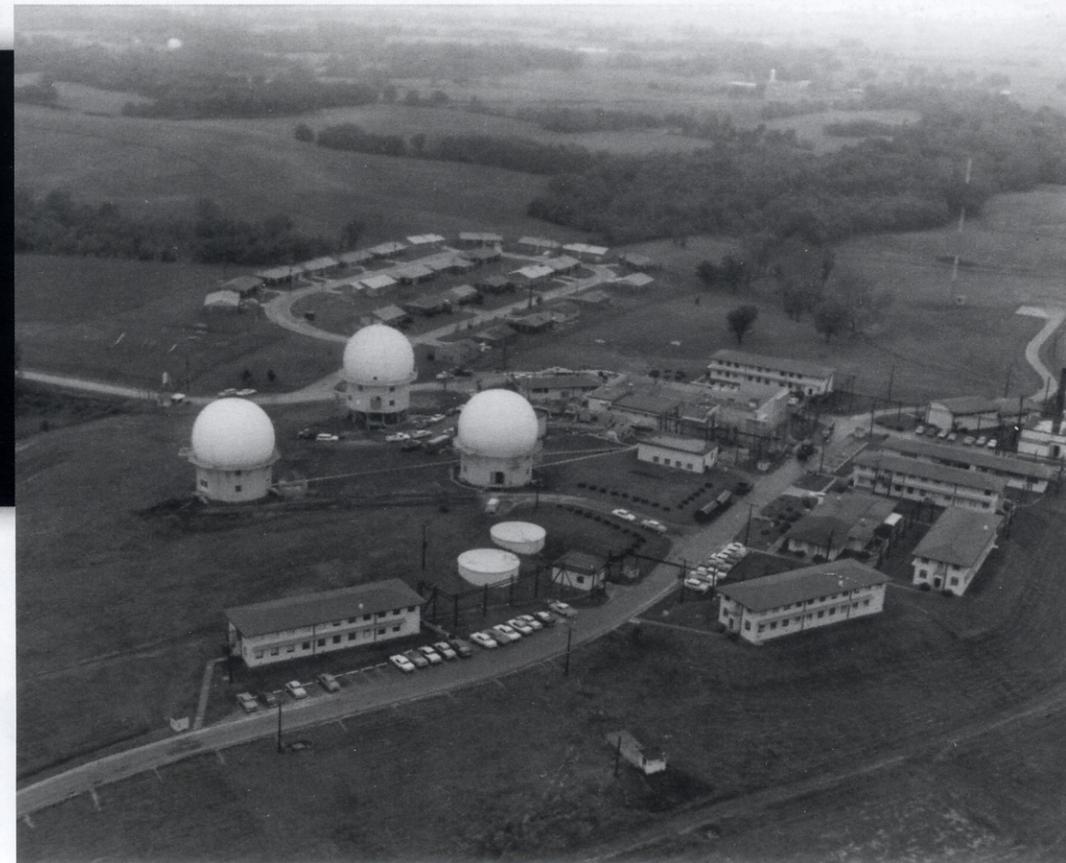
SNAP—was probably more disruptive than useful.

The Nike technical improvement program envisioned two further iterations beyond the Hercules, namely the Nike-Zeus and Nike-X antiballistic missile systems. Neither became operational, though advanced development work did get beyond the drawing board stage.

During the period between the first Nike deployment in the mid-1950s and in the ensuing decade, ARADCOM experienced a rapid build-up. Its headquarters evolved under the aegis of CONAD/NORAD and was home-based in the Colorado Springs area. ARADCOM’s “defended area” included the entire continental United States (plus an isolated outlier Nike firing battery in the snow and ice of Thule Air Base in Greenland) to accommodate tactical span of control. The CONUS geography was subdivided into five regional headquarters, or RAADCOMs, whose mission was largely administration and training. The regions and their locations were: 1st Region, Fort Totten, New York; 2d Region at Richards-Gebaur AFB, Missouri; 5th Region at Fort Sheridan, Illinois; 6th Region at Fort Baker, California; and 7th Region at McChord AFB, Washington.

At the zenith of ARADCOM’s operational life, it comprised forty individual defense areas that were the tactical force of the command. The number of fire units (batteries) in each defense area was determined by geographical size of the defended area. At its peak in the early 1960s, ARADCOM fielded some 262 Nike fire units, seventy-four of which were manned by Army National Guard formations. Very shortly after reaching its maximum deployment, ARADCOM began phasing out Nike-Ajax fire units that had not been earmarked for conversion to Hercules. As the 1960s rolled on, the build-up in Vietnam began to claim priority

An aerial photograph of Site SL-90 (St. Louis Defense Area) taken in May 1963 shows the site’s radars and administrative buildings. (National Archives)



that began to bleed more and more of ARADCOM’s strength.

ARADCOM’s geographic sprawl created a somewhat unique recruiting advantage. The Army’s policy of allowing and encouraging volunteering enlistees to choose service specialization or location made it at least theoretically possible for first-time recruits to serve near homes of record. One negative aspect of the location selection feature was a tendency for local juvenile courts to offer delinquents the Hobson’s choice to join the Army or go to jail. Troublemakers taking the enlistment alternative often proved to be disciplinary problems.

While service at a Nike site was generally routine to the point of monotony, there were two incidents of note during the life of the program. The first occurred on 14 April 1955, at a site manned by Battery B, 36th AAA Missile Battalion, when a Nike-Ajax missile was accidentally launched during routine maintenance. The missile flew into the air and detonated, showering the area (including the nearby Baltimore-Washington Parkway) with debris. Luckily, no one was injured. A second and far more serious incident took place on 22 May 1958 at a site operated by Battery B, 526th AAA Missile Battalion, in Middletown, New Jersey. As Army personnel conducted a modification to a Nike-Ajax, an explosion tore through the site, killing six enlisted men and four Army civilians. The explosion destroyed a total of eight missiles and caused minor damage to nearby civilian property (but no civilian casualties).

By the mid-1960s, the threat of Soviet attack against the continental United States by manned bombers was replaced by intercontinental ballistic missiles. As a result, the Army began phasing out ground-based air defense sites around the country. By 1974, the last remaining Nike sites were phased out—the final site to be deactivated was located at Homestead AFB in Florida. The follow-

ing year, on 30 June 1975, ARADCOM itself cased its colors and faded into Army history.

During its twenty-odd years of operation, service in ARADCOM presented certain, perhaps unique challenges to the operation of a U.S. Army major command, all of them deriving from the requirement to maintain a round-the clock wartime footing in what was essentially a peacetime environment. The geographical isolation of many Nike firing batteries exerted considerable pressure on the captains (and often lieutenants) who were charged with running self-contained miniature armies required to “lean forward” in readiness to engage with an enemy that fortunately never came. At the end, the Oozlefinch flew—backward of course—into Army history. □

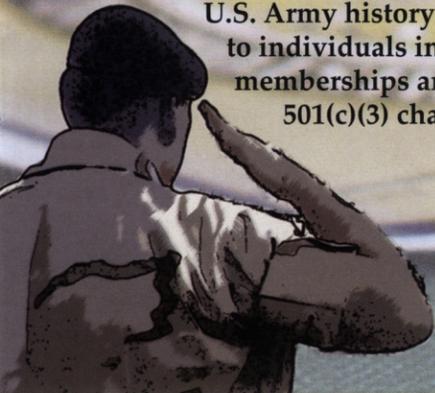
## About the Author

Colonel Woolf P. Gross, USA-Ret., retired after twenty-eight years of total service split evenly between Field Artillery assignments and the Foreign Area Officer Program. He commanded several times at the battery level and was the charter commander of the 1st Battalion, 32d Field Artillery (Lance), as it reorganized to the system in Germany. He served as the executive officer and briefly, commander of a direct support howitzer battalion in Vietnam during the “post-Tet offensive” in 1969. He is a charter member of the Army Historical Foundation and resides in Arlington, Virginia.

# Membership



The Army Historical Foundation's charter is to preserve, promote, and present U.S. Army history and the heritage of the American Soldier. Membership is open to individuals interested in preserving the heritage of the American Soldier. All memberships are tax-deductible. AHF is a member-based, non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

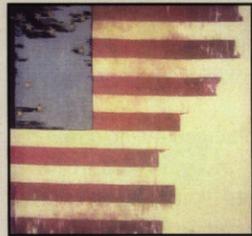


We look forward to welcoming you to our ranks!

*What we do...*

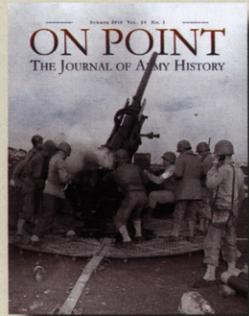
## Historical Preservation

The Army Historical Foundation has supported several historic preservation projects, including restoration of the 20th Maine battle flag used at Gettysburg. The Foundation provides grants to Army museums for use in preservation projects and serves as a facilitator for donations of artifacts to the National Museum of the United States Army.



## Publications

The Foundation produces a quarterly publication, *On Point*, which provides articles on Army history, book reviews, and other features. The Foundation also published *U.S. Army: A Complete History*, a comprehensive and lavishly illustrated book on the history of the Army.



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# Why my brick?

The story *behind* the inscription.

**With** installation of commemorative bricks at the National Museum of the United States Army (NMUSA) in full swing, more and more brick purchasers are choosing to share the story behind their bricks. First Sergeant Butch Schwoyer, USA-Ret., recently relayed the story behind his three bricks, purchased for himself, his father, and his son. Schwoyer served in Vietnam and Operation DESERT STORM and retired as a first sergeant in 1992. In recalling his service, Schwoyer said, "I had the privilege of serving and fighting next to the most patriotic and dedicated men and women I have ever met. I would do it all over again if I had the chance." He originally purchased a brick for himself to commemorate that transformative time in his life.

When his former company commander, Colonel Darcy Brewer, USA-Ret., NMUSA Senior Project Manager, Huffman Developments, personally presented him with his brick certificate, Schwoyer and his wife were inspired to purchase two more bricks for his father, Arthur, now deceased, and their son, Chris. First Lieutenant Arthur Schwoyer served in World War II and received two Silver Stars, four Purple Hearts, and a Bronze Star, among other awards. Sergeant Chris Schwoyer served from 1989 to 1995 and was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas; Baumholder, Germany; and Fort Lewis, Washington.

Schwoyer reflected on the significance of these bricks to his family, noting, "Our family, like millions of other soldier families throughout history, love our country, and wanted to do our part defending the USA. Through these bricks, we, our family and friends, can now visually observe our patriotic contributions along the *Path of Remembrance*. Thank you for providing this special place in history."

To share your own "Why My Brick" story visit [armyhistory.org/bricks](http://armyhistory.org/bricks). Post a picture of your brick on social media with #myarmybrick and we'll share your post! 📷



ABOVE: Schwoyer purchased commemorative bricks to honor his service as well as that of his father and son.

LEFT: First Sergeant Butch Schwoyer, USA-Ret., poses with his son, then-Private First Class Chris Schwoyer.



EXAMPLE II



EXAMPLE III



EXAMPLE I



EXAMPLE IV

This is What is Possible

Please read the information "Why My Brick?" on Page 7, and then give us your opinion, idea, and/or what-ever.

## MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

All members receive quarterly issues of *On Point: The Journal of Army History*, a member pin, and bumper sticker. Benefits also include an opportunity to receive advance notice of programs and events such as staff rides and the Foundation's annual meeting, discounts for our online Museum store, and up-to-date news on the National Museum of the United States Army.

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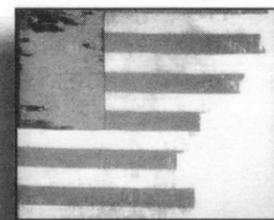
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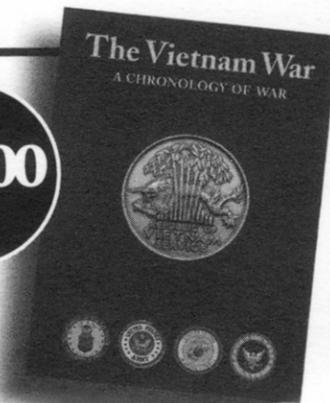
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