

# PRESERVATION NOTES



A quarterly newsletter brought to you by  
**PRESERVATION ALASKA**

**ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

A nonprofit with a mission to protect and preserve Alaska's built heritage

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## Nike Missile Trainer Donation

### Next up for FONSS: a Missile on Display

By Doris Thomas

Ever since our first tour guests peered into an empty bunker and we attempted to describe how the mighty 41-foot long Nike Hercules missiles would have looked, Friends of Nike Site Summit has had a dream to acquire a Nike-Hercules missile for display. After 12 years of our tour guides telling visitors that we hoped to eventually have a missile on-site, that eventuality has become a reality. In September, the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry donated the Nike-Hercules trainer missile that had languished in pieces on their property for over 40 years.

“It was a Herculean effort to transport the missile from Wasilla to Site Summit this fall,” said Greg Durocher, FONSS director.

“The transition on Sept. 17th involved three donated trucks and a large contingent of volunteers from both MATI and FONSS. Once at

Site Summit, we secured it from the elements to await restoration next summer. We owe a world of thanks to Alaska Demolition for donating their big semi and trailer to carry the biggest section; to Cliff Neal for driving that big rig; to Tom Namtvedt and Gordy Heinen for donating their flatbed trucks; and to all the folks at MATI, especially Mike Kerr, Dick Sloan and Mike Pollock, who prepped the components and assisted with loading up at the Wasilla museum.”

At the time of the transfer, Dick Sloan, vice president of MATI said, “This transfer of ownership will allow this unique piece of historical equipment to be displayed and used for educational purposes in the appropriate setting at Site Summit.”

This training missile is the same as the ones that were used at Ft Bliss, Texas, to train soldiers going through Advanced Individual Training (AIT) for MOS 16B (Launcher Crewman Nike Hercules

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The main missile cannister loaded up and ready to head to Site Summit on Sept. 17, 2022. When this photo was taken, the nose cone section had not yet been added to the rear of the trailer. (Photo by Mark Rice)



# Friends of Nike Site Summit

Missile), said Nike veteran Lance Morgan. “Everything on the trainer is the same as the actual missile soldiers would see at their duty assignment. The warhead section has the training safety plug with a red ribbon attached. It also came with an arming plug with a green ribbon, and plugs to indicate surface to air and surface to surface.



Gordy Heinen checks the contact between the forklift tines and the loading straps before the booster is lifted off his trailer at Site Summit. Lance Morgan, right, supervises. (Photo by Doris Thomas)



The missile booster strapped down on Gordy Heinen’s truck ready for the haul to Site Summit. (Photo by Doris Thomas)

The booster had an inert igniter installed,” he added.

FONSS hasn’t yet been able to look in the largest canister, which should have the rocket motor portion of the missile body. The smallest container has the guidance system (nose) along with the static probe. FONSS employed a forklift borrowed from Joint Base Elmendorf to move the larger containers from the trailers at



Lance Morgan, Tom Namtvedt and Mark Rice observe as Cliff Neal pilots the forklift carrying the missile booster to the launch apron. The booster section and the main rocket assembly (large cannister at left) were left outside the bunker until reassembly begins in summer 2023. (Photo by Doris Thomas)



Tom Namtvedt watches as Mike Pollock loads fin sections onto his trailer for transport to Site Summit. MATI board member Mike Kerr (in orange vest) supervises. (Photo by Doris Thomas)

Site Summit. Most of the pieces are in the bunker except for the largest cannister, which is also the heaviest, and the rocket booster.

“We hope to get started assembling the missile by the end of June 2023,” said Evan Rowland, work party chairman for FONSS. “We will probably need a forklift to get the pieces gathered



Nike veterans Tom Namtvedt and Lance Morgan carry a tailfin to the bunker while volunteer Doug Ruhl uses a forklift to bring in the warhead section cannister. (Photo by Doris Thomas)



Nike veteran Lance Morgan examines the components of the warhead cannister. The white bags contain desiccants to reduce moisture and seem to have done their job over the last 40+ years. (Photo by Doris Thomas)

together, and then may use a chain hoist from the overhead beam trolley to assemble the pieces, some of which may weigh up to 3,000 pounds. Luckily, we have Lance, who use to do this exact same thing at Site Point 52

years ago. Our first step will be to locate a missile cradle and if that doesn't happen, we will need to build one out of wood or metal. So, we have a lot of work to do and would appreciate any help from current or new volunteers," said Rowland.

The missile is currently painted Army "OD green," but FONSS plans to paint it white, the color of the missiles that were at Site Summit, Site Point and Site Bay when those three sites protected Anchorage from foreign bomber attacks 1959-1979.

FONSS continues deliberations to acquire a second missile from the Air Power Park museum in Hampton, Virginia (see photo).



This Nike Hercules missile at the Air Power Park in Virginia shows what the missile FONSS recently acquired from the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry will look like when reassembled and refurbished. FONSS is interested in also acquiring this missile. (Photo courtesy Air Power Park)



Loading main cannister onto trailer at MATI. (Photo by Doris Thomas)

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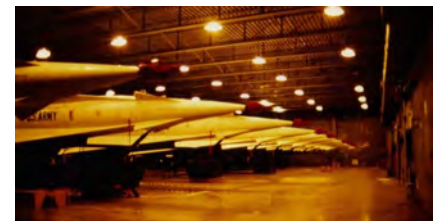
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This is the challenge facing our FONSS volunteers this coming summer. Here, NATO troops being trained at Fort Bliss join the missile to its booster cluster. (Photo by Don Neal)



This shows what a launch bay full of Nike Hercules missiles would look like. This was taken at Site Point, now home to Kincaid Park, possibly in the bunker now known as the Wax Bunker, where skis are prepped for the day and where FONSS does Cold War interpretive talks for visitors. (Photo by Don Neal)



Unloading the missile up at Site Summit. A lot of volunteers and equipment to move the missile. Next step is restoration. (Photo by Greg Durocher)



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