



552nd ADA Group Photograph Gerszewski Barracks - ca. 1958

Charlie Battery is honored and pleased to present this rare and unique photograph offered by Wade Butler, son of Master Sergeant. James O. Butler, Launching Area Platoon Sergeant. It's just one of a suite of donated photographs that are part of the Butler Family Archives to be viewed on our website.

This photograph is almost 60 years old and it has been extremely challenging to restore. It has severe cracking on the right side, and the ravages of time have indeed taken their toll in this image. From the beginning I decided that the only way the restoration could be successful was to not worry about the time it would take, but to take it one crack and one pixel at a time. I hope all are pleased with the results.

A Brief History

The following information is an excerpt from the 3rd Missile Battalion, 71st Artillery book commemorating the Fifth Anniversary of the unit. It was published by Headquarters Battery in 1963. This history not only documents the lineage of the 3rd/71st, but of Charlie Battery itself. This document can be viewed in the Archives Section of our website.

“The lineage of the 3d Missile Battalion, 71st Artillery goes back more than forty-five years to 12 May 1918 when Battery C, 71st Artillery (Coast Artillery Corps) was organized in the Regular Army at Fort Andrews, Massachusetts. Shortly after the First World War the unit was demobilized, and it was not until 1 July 1940 that it was reconstituted in the Regular Army as Battery C, 71st Coast Artillery (AA). On 1 September 1943, reorganization and redesignation led to the formation of Battery C, 71st AA Gun Battalion.

During World War II, the “3rd of the 71st” earned battle honors, through the 552nd AAA Gun Battalion, for the Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe campaigns. Inactivation followed the second world war, but in 1949 the unit was reactivated at Fort Bliss, Texas. From then until 1958, the unit was designated Battery C, 71st AA Missile Battalion.

On 12 August 1958, the organic elements of the battalion were constituted and on 17 August Battery B became the first Nike-Ajax battery in the battalion to be declared operational. The organization was then transferred, on 1 September 1958, less personnel and equipment, from Lorton, Virginia to Germany.

Concurrently, the 552nd AAA Gun Battalion in Germany was redesignated as the 3rd Missile Battalion, 71st Artillery. This link with the 552nd established the 3rd Missile Battalion, as Colonel Leech mentions, as one of the oldest continuously active air defense battalions in the defense of Western Europe. At that time the battalion commander was lieutenant Colonel Philip J. Corso and the battalion consisted of the line batteries A, B, C, D, and Hq & Hq Battery, all at temporary sites” . .





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