



Charlie Battery 3rd Missile Battalion 71st Artillery

Stockheim ♥ Haberschlacht ♥ Niederhofen ♥ Kleingartach ♥ Hardheim

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

Charlie Battery Inauguration Launching Area

Just when one thinks that there could not be any more information or images about Charlie Battery, along comes a new trove of photos sent to us by our good friend Thomas Scholz of Heilbronn. And the real treasure of all of them is the great photo of Captain John Popovics, the first BCO (Battery Commanding Officer), which up to now, has been sorely missing. So we are very pleased to now have his photo, and he seems to be thoroughly enjoying being the host in presenting his new command.

This group of photos are all in the Launching Area and appear to be part of the opening day inauguration when Charlie Battery moved to its permanent site near Kleingartach in August 1959. The opening ceremonies were held 15 December, with many high-ranking German officials attending, including the Minister President of Baden-Württemberg Kurt Georg Kiesinger who cut the ribbon officially opening the site of a brand new U.S. Army Nike Guided Missile Base, adding a major new weapon to the NATO Cold War arsenal.

The weapon is being introduced to the West German dignitaries demonstrating the various aspects of the guided missile, like functions in Alpha Section such as elevating and lowering of the 3 missiles on their launchers, and a demonstration of fueling a Nike Ajax missile.

Fueling a Nike Ajax was nasty business and a potentially deadly one as well. The fuel consisted of 2 highly toxic acids that when combined exploded with great velocity and thrust, which means that there were two separate tanks for each part of said combination.

The fueling photos shown in this article are done for purely demonstration purposes only and not a real time situation, which is a much more complicated process and was done in a much more isolated and protected area.

Captain Popovics seems to be up on the trailer, along with the protected fueler, explaining the process to the dignitaries, who seem to be quite interested.

Once a again Thomas Schulz has provided us with new and interesting information about our Charlie Battery experience. Again we say.... Thank you Thomas...!

Vielen Dank...!



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Battery Commander Captain John Popovics hosting opening day demonstrations at the inner security gate entrance

Baden-Württemberg Minister-President Kurt Georg Kiesinger along with other officials/military view a demonstration





A fueling Demonstration of a Nike Ajax Guided Missile. The wearing of acid resistant suit illustrates the danger



The German entourage looks on with seemingly genuine interest, as the missile fueling demonstration proceeds.





Alpha Section with the crew revetment in the background and the missile storage hanger to the right. The variety of launcher elevations is for show. The far right almost vertical is the correct firing elevation. The lower roof to left of the missile hanger is the section latrine.





