

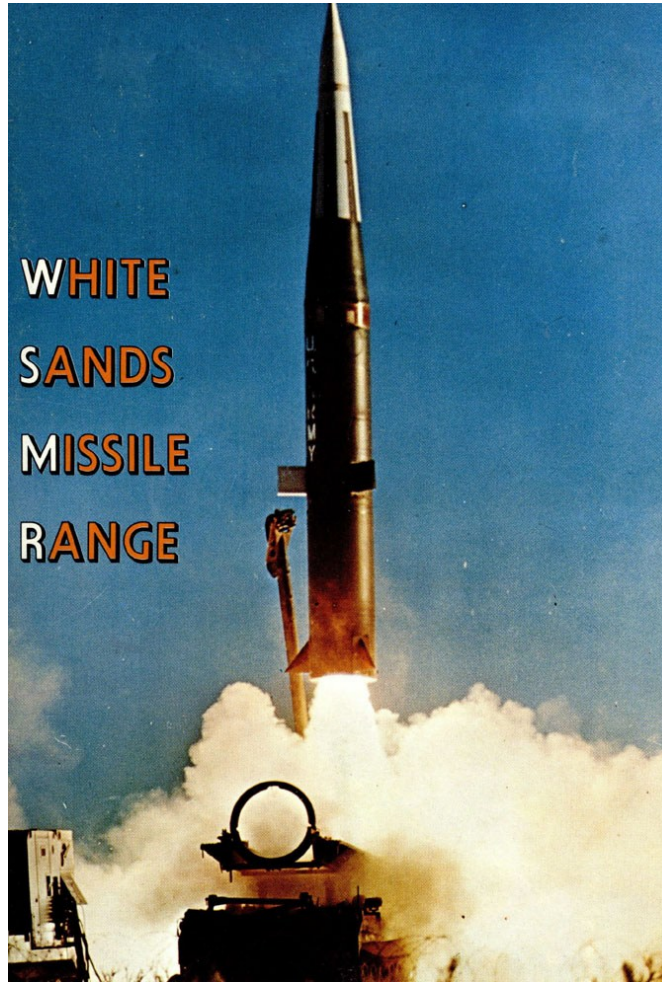
# The WSMR Museum



The Mission of the White Sands Missile Range Museum is "to collect, preserve, and interpret the history of the greater White Sands area — its peoples, lands, and technological contributions in support of the United States Armed Forces — from the prehistoric era to the present."



The Museum was established in 1994 to collect, preserve, and exhibit artifacts and other materials relating to the history of WSMR and the Tularosa Basin. Over time, we have changed and expanded our mission, scope of exhibition, and supporting functions to include the history of the surrounding lands' native peoples and cultures, its flora and fauna, and natural geology and landscapes.



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[www.wsmrmuseum.com](http://www.wsmrmuseum.com)



[www.wsmrmuseum.com/wsmr-historical-foundation/](http://www.wsmrmuseum.com/wsmr-historical-foundation/)



[www.youtube.com/@wsmr.museum](https://www.youtube.com/@wsmr.museum)



Need Directions?

# White Sands Missile Range Museum

*Atomic. Missile. Space.  
Birthplace of American Ages*



Tuesday — Saturday

10am — 4pm

Closed on Sundays, Monday, and  
Federal Holidays

## Atomic

On 16 July 1945, personnel from the United States Army's Manhattan Project successfully conducted the first test of an atomic weapon, codenamed "Gadget," at the Trinity Site on White Sands Missile Range. With the Cold War looming on the horizon, the US took its first steps into an age dominated by the atom and the forces it could unleash.



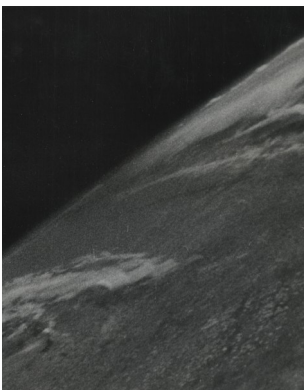
## Missile

A captured German V-2 rocket, repurposed for scientific research, lifts off from its platform at Army Launch Area 1 on what was then White Sands Proving Ground. The missiles first tested at White Sands would give way for evermore sophisticated systems. The structure in the foreground is the Army Blockhouse, designed to withstand a direct impact by an errant V-2.



## Space

A significant milestone in the early days of American rocketry occurred on 24 October 1946 when V-2 No. 13 launched from White Sands Proving Ground. No. 13 captured the first images of the curvature of the Earth at an altitude of 65 miles. Two decades after these baby steps into space, mankind was preparing to send astronauts to the moon.

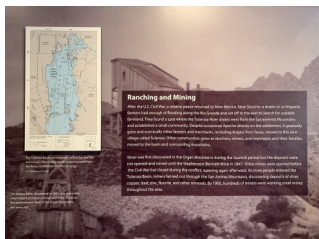


## Natural History at White Sands



White Sands Missile Range is home to hundreds of species of animals, from insects and birds to oryx, elk, and deer. The WSMR Environmental Directorate protects this wild heritage and conducts internationally-recognized biological research throughout the year while ensuring that the wildlife on the range is protected in accordance to all state and federal laws.

## History of Early New Mexico



The Tularosa Basin was home to ranchers and miners. Goats were raised in the mountains, with cattle common in the basin itself. Miners fanned out through the San Andres Mountains, discovering deposits of silver, copper, lead, zinc, fluorite, and other minerals. By 1900, hundreds of miners were working small mines throughout the area.

## The Battle of Hembrillo Basin



By early 1880, Victorio had returned to U.S. soil and led his people across the Rio Grande into the San Andres Mountains and into Hembrillo Basin. About 60 Mescalero fighters joined Victorio's roughly 140 warriors. Though Col. Edward Hatch had favored Victorio's pleas to remain at Ojo Caliente, he decided to end their cat-and-mouse game.

## The Bataan Death March



The infamous Bataan Death March was not one long march by a single group but rather a series of marches by several groups headed to Japanese prison camps. Many men had tropical diseases, or were starving, dehydrated, and sun-stroked. Those stopping for water were beaten or killed. Anyone found with an item perhaps taken from a Japanese soldier was executed.

## Trinity Site and the Manhattan Project



In 1939, German scientists announced that they had caused fission by bombarding an atom of uranium with neutrons. It split the atom into two, which spun off additional neutrons that split other atoms—a chain reaction. If the chain reaction could be sustained, the energy released by the process would make possible bombs of unimaginable explosive force.

## Early Rocketry and the V-2



The American V-2 program was a catalyst for developing optical and electrical tracking systems, particularly in early tracking telescopes. They provided direct observation, at extreme ranges and altitudes, greatly enhancing knowledge of missile flight dynamics and upper atmospheric conditions.

## Missiles, Technology, and the Cold War



Technology development continued steadily until the Chinese communist regime, which successfully tested nuclear weapons in 1964, successfully tested a ballistic missile in 1967. The doubled threat to the United States, from both China and the Soviet Union, accelerated anti-ballistic missile defense development.

## The Space Program at White Sands



NASA was seeking a vehicle to launch astronauts into space and eventually decided on the Mercury-Redstone, which carried astronauts into space starting in 1961. NASA conducted research at WSMR for decades and WSMR became an alternate landing site for the Space Shuttle, with Columbia landing on the range in 1982.

## Range Instrumentation and Test Support



A tremendous amount of work goes into a successful test at WSMR. Before any test occurs, the meteorological team, range safety, drone crews, optical engineers, and range control all have critical tasks to perform, no matter the size or scale, to ensure that each and every test is conducted flawlessly.

## Beyond Rockets



In addition to the tasks of researching and developing rockets and missiles, WSMR is able to support a wide range of tests and simulations. WSMR projects have included the Solar Furnace, Temperature Test Facility, High Energy Laser Systems Test Facility, the Large Blast Thermal Simulator, and the Electromagnetic Pulse Facility.