

General Information About Visiting the Museum

White Sands Missile Range is an active Army installation. As such, security measures are in place. For US citizens, a valid photo identification is required for one to walk through the gate to the museum. (We are located “at” the gate, for an easy walk!) To drive on, one needs a valid driver’s license, proof of vehicle insurance, and current vehicle registration. We welcome visitors from around the world, and passport holders need to present a valid passport to walk through the gate. Non-US citizen passport holders are not allowed to drive into the installation.



The Museum is located approximately 20 minutes east of Las Cruces, New Mexico on US 70 and one hour north of El Paso, Texas.

Open everyday except Federal Holidays and Sundays:

Tuesday—Friday 9:00 to 4:00

Saturday 10:00 to 3:00

Please call (575) 678-3358 for more information or visit www.wsmr-history.org



US Army Center of Military History White Sands Missile Range Museum and Archives

“The Birthplace of America’s Missile and Space Activity!”



V-2 Rocket Number 2 Launch Preparations at White Sands Proving Ground, May, 1946.

The Museum

The WSMR Museum was established in 1994 as a place to collect, preserve and exhibit artifacts and other materials relating to the history of White Sands Missile Range and the Tularosa Basin. The main museum building houses exhibits on the Jornada Mogollon people and the frontier Army in New Mexico—including the Mexican War and Civil War. The museum also exhibits the battles between the “Buffalo Soldiers” of the 9th Cavalry and Warm Springs Apache led by Chief Victorio, culminating in the Battle of Hembra Basin, which lies within the boundaries of White Sands. During World War 2, land now on White Sands was chosen for the testing of the first atomic bomb, developed by Manhattan Project scientists in Los Alamos, New Mexico. On July 9th, 1945, the world changed as the Atomic Age began. Around the same time the first atomic bomb was being detonated, other scientists, military personnel and contractors were building a new installation called White Sands Proving Ground (WSPG).

WSPG was expecting the arrival of captured German V-2 rockets and scientists headed by Wernher von Braun. The first V-2 flew, not completely successfully, in April 1946, launching the Space Age.

Missile Park

In addition to the exhibits in the museum, a fully restored V-2 rocket is exhibited in its own building on the south edge of Missile Park. Missile Park is our large outdoor space dedicated to showing the variety of rockets, missiles, aircraft, optical equipment, and radars that have been developed and tested on the range since 1945. In 1982 Space Shuttle Columbia landed here, and we also have on display the small control tower used in its final approach. Missile Park is open to the public every day of the year, from dawn to dusk.



Archives

The Museum archives is housed in a building off-site and contains approximately 100,000 cataloged documents, photographs and videos. The history of the archives predates that of the museum, as many documents and other material was originally collected by unofficial installation historians and later the Public Affairs Office. This material was later given to the museum and provided the framework used in building the current collection. The archives consists of several large collections, including the V-2 program at White Sands, the Manhattan Project and Trinity Site, and personal archives from notable people such as first installation commander Colonel Harold Turner and astronomer Clyde Tombaugh. In addition, numerous items from tests throughout the history of White Sands, including the Navy, Air Force, and NASA, are available. A searchable database is available on the museum website and the archives can be visited with prior coordination with the museum.