

Nuclear Warheads to Be Kept Here

Nike-Hercules Test Firing Slated on Oahu

JUNE 18, 1960

By MARK WATERS
General Fredrick G. Waite, Army Pacific Ordnance officer, says the Nike-Hercules anti-aircraft guided missile will be fired here in practice and a range is being sought.

Previous reports indicated the missile, capable of being armed with a nuclear warhead, would not be fired here except "in anger" and that practice firings would be done on the Mainland. Waite, in an interview, said the range would be over the ocean and the missile would be fired at drone aircraft.

He said the Hercules can knock down anything that flies, including air-breathing missiles such as the Bomarc and Regulus but excepting I.C.B.M. and I.R.B.M.-type missiles.

"The Oahu-based Nike-Hercules guided-missile system could readily detect and destroy any Russian aircraft of the 'U-2 spy plane' variety with ease," he said. Asked why the Russians

apparently don't have Hercules-type missiles, he commented that the U.S.S.R. could be devoting its energies to the spectacular while the U.S. is concentrating both on the spectacular and the sophisticated missiles.

GAVE ORDER

According to the Russian press, Premier Khrushchev gave the order to fire on the U-2.

Waite and others at Army Pacific headquarters at Fort Shafter don't know yet what the chain of command will be to give the order to fire the Hercules here at a Russian plane over the Islands.

Because the Hercules is capable of being armed with a nuclear warhead, it is obvious such warheads will be kept on hand on Oahu.

Waite said the civilian populace here need not fear the missile because "it is one of the safest weapons we have and none will ever drop on the Islands."

START NEXT YEAR

He said the first practice shot may come next year.

The five-ton Hercules missiles cost about \$75,000 each.

The missile, Waite said, is effective at altitudes well above 18 miles but could shoot down Regulus-type missiles at 1,000-foot altitudes fired from a submarine off Oahu.

The Nike-Hercules missile sites on Oahu will be manned by Hawaii National Guard missilemen.

These men made outstanding records firing the missile during training on the Mainland and Waite said "they are doing an outstanding job and I'm truly impressed."



General Waite explains capability of Nike Hercules missile.—Army Photo.