



# Former U.S. Army NIKE PR-79 Control Area Foster, RI

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS****BUILDING STRONG®**

## **Site Description**

The former US Army NIKE PR-79 Control Area (Site) is an approximately 8-acre parcel of land located near the top of Oak Hill off of Route 101 at the end of Theodore Foster Drive in Foster, Rhode Island. The coordinates for this Site are on the U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute Quadrangle for Clayville, RI and are approximately 41° 50' 31" North by 71° 42' 57" West. The property is recorded in the Town of Foster Assessor's Office as Lot 10 on Plate 18.

The Site formerly consisted of six buildings, three radars and support facilities enclosed by a 6-foot high chain link fence around the entire property. The three main buildings were the former Administrative Building, the former Barracks, and the former Mess Hall. At present, only the former Mess Hall building exists and is used by the Town of Foster for the Foster-Glocester Regional School District Special Education Department administration office. The other former buildings on-Site were the former Radar Control Building, a former Engine Generator Building, and a former Pump House. There are several paved areas for parking lots and roadways. There is also a former sewage treatment area located to the West of the Site at the base of Oak Hill related to the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area.



Present day view of the former Mess Hall building which hosts the Special Education Department administration office for the Foster-Glocester Regional School District.

## **Site History**

United States government acquired the Site between 1955 and 1957. The Army used the Site as a Control Area for radar guided anti-aircraft missile control as part of the NIKE Missile Defense System. This former NIKE PR-79 Control Area was reported excess to the General Services Administration (GSA) in 1964. The Site was transferred to the Town of Foster in July 1965 and was used as an elementary school until 1989. Currently the former Mess Hall building is occupied by the Foster-Glocester Regional School District Special Education Department and is used for administrative purposes.



NIKE Missile sites were constructed throughout the continental United States during the mid-1950s, in response to Cold War threats. The Missile sites were constructed to act as defensive rings around major industrial and urban areas and generally consisted of a separate missile launcher area and integrated fire control area, which were generally less than two-miles apart. The launcher areas were where missiles and warheads were stored, maintained, and if necessary, launched. The control area was where the radar and communication equipment, needed to detect potential targets and guide launched missiles, was used, maintained, and stored.

Trichloroethylene (TCE), a commonly used cleaning and degreasing agent of the time, was known to be used at the NIKE Control Area. TCE and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are often found in the environment at old military installations through routine operational use, spills, or outdated disposal practices. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) would eventually regulate many of these compounds.

In 1987, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) conducted routine sampling at two water supply wells located at the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area and found TCE at concentrations above the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for TCE of 5 micrograms per liter (µg/L). In response, RIDOH extended sampling to approximately 22 residential properties in the general vicinity of the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area and found TCE in one residential water supply well at a concentration above the MCL. RIDOH also tested nine additional residences in the general vicinity of the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area and found no impacts associated with Army-related activities.

In 1988, the Foster Board of Education requested that the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) investigate groundwater at the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area to determine if TCE was related to former Army activities at the Site. USACE conducted a field survey of the Site and completed an Inventory Project Report (INPR) that same year. The INPR concluded that former Army activities may have resulted in the release of TCE to the environment. Additionally, during the INPR field survey an approximately 6,000-gallon underground storage tank (UST) presumed to contain diesel fuel was discovered in the northeast corner of the Site, next to the former Frequency Changer / Generator Building. Based on the findings of the INPR, the Department of Defense (DoD) entered the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area into the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) under the Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) project number D01RI0063 02.

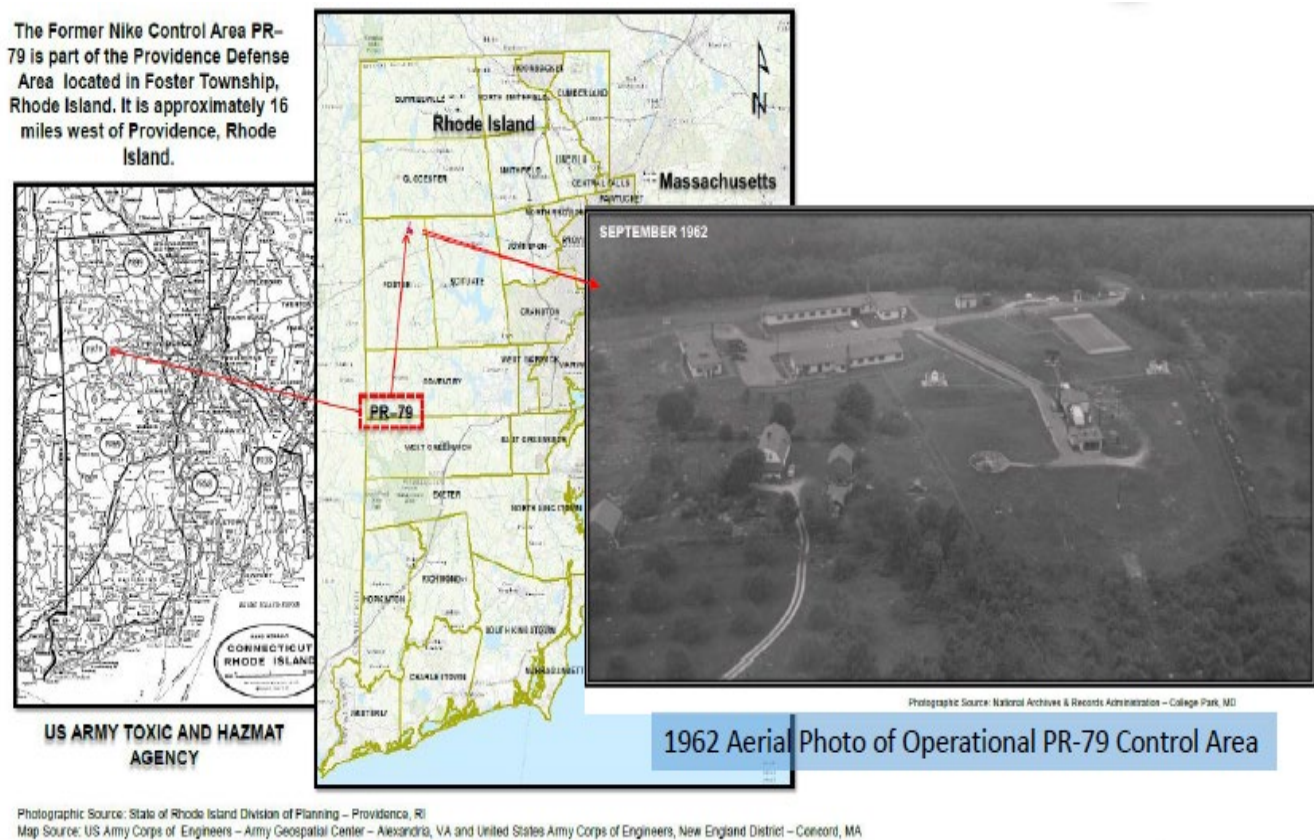
Although the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area is not on the National Priorities List of Superfund Sites, in March 1992 the Site was added to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act Information System (CERCLIS) database and given the site number RID987492485. The CERCLIS database is a management system the USEPA uses to track activities at hazardous waste sites considered for cleanup under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as Superfund.

### **Environmental Investigation Activities**

In 1992, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and the USEPA completed a Preliminary Assessment (PA) and concluded that additional investigation work should be conducted in order to further understand the Site's potential danger to health or welfare. A follow-up Site Inspection (SI) investigation was conducted by contractors working for the RIDEM in 1994. The SI found TCE at a concentration above the MCL in an unfiltered water sample collected from a faucet in the former water pump house that supplied the NIKE PR-79 Control Area.



In June 1994, at the request of the Foster Board of Education, a contractor working for USACE executed the removal and closure of the 6,000-gallon UST from the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area, which was identified during the INPR field investigation. Environmental Science Services, Inc.'s UST Closure Assessment dated July 1994 observed no evidence of a release from the tank.



In August 2000, RIDEM issued a Letter of Responsibility (LOR), pursuant to Rules and Regulations for the Investigation and Remediation of Hazardous Material Release (enacted September 4, 1996), to the United States Army identifying the Army as the responsible party (RP) for the Site and making the Army responsible for the investigation and remediation of hazardous wastes at the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area.

Since 2001, the New England District (NAE) of the USACE has been conducting environmental investigations at the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area, which have included annual sampling of both on-Site and off-Site water supply wells at three adjacent residential properties as well as field investigations to characterize the potential source area for TCE.

In spring of 2002, NAE installed carbon filtration systems on water supply wells at three adjacent residential properties where TCE was detected and continues to maintain those systems.

In 2010, USACE tasked the U.S. Army Public Health Command (USPHC), whose mission is to assure the environmental and occupational health of our nation's soldiers and civilians, to conduct a voluntary well survey at targeted residential wells located in the vicinity of the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area. This well survey entailed sampling 13 homes located within a mile of the Site (out of approximately 70 homes, which provided USACE permission to collect a water sample from their water supply well for analysis of VOCs). This residential well survey was only a precautionary

measure and was conducted as an update to the previous residential sampling efforts conducted by the state of Rhode Island in the late-1980s/early-1990s. Results of this sampling effort found no water supply wells containing VOCs at concentrations above applicable MCLs, except for one pre- filtration water sample collected from a single residential well that was previously known to be impacted by the Site.

USACE conducted environmental investigations of various media between 2013-2016 at the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area to identify the potential source(s) of historic Army releases to the environment, define the nature and extent of Army-related impacts, and to collect sufficient data to support a feasibility study for potential remediation of the source(s) and contaminated media.

A site Remedial Investigation (RI) was completed and a final report is being developed. Based on the detections of VOC's groundwater, a FS will be conducted to evaluate cleanup options and recommend a technically feasible and cost-effective option.

### **Future Work**

USACE will begin more extensive on site investigation activities at the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area in an effort to further characterize the impacts related to former Army activities. A human health risk assessment for the Site is in development. The results of the assessment will be made available in the information repository upon completion. USACE will make environmental reports available at the town of Foster Public Library along with information pertaining to potential future cleanup efforts at the former NIKE PR-79 Control Area.

### **Community Outreach**

USACE will provide community outreach opportunities to interested stakeholders, which may include issuing draft documents for review and comment and holding public meetings.

#### **How to Contact Us:**

If you have any questions or comments about the environmental investigation activities please contact:

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