

# NPL Site Narrative for Willow Grove Naval Air and Air Reserve Station

## WILLOW GROVE NAVAL AIR AND AIR RESERVE STATION Willow Grove, Pennsylvania

**Conditions at Proposal (August 23, 1994):** Willow Grove Naval Air Station (WGNAS) occupies an airfield established in 1919, approximately 25 miles north of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The adjacent facility, Willow Grove Air Reserve Station (WGARS), was known as Willow Grove Air Reserve Facility before October 1992.

The two facilities perform similar operations, jointly use onsite waste disposal facilities, and have nearby sources. There are no barriers between the facilities that prevent migration of contaminants, and the same people are affected by the contaminants. Therefore, WGNAS and WGARS are regarded as one site.

Aircraft operations at Willow Grove began during the 1920s, when the facility was named Pitcairn Airfield. The US Navy acquired the airfield in 1942 and jet training began there in 1949. WGNAS and WGARS expanded and, by 1986, encompassed 1,015 acres. Of that area, 162 acres are owned by the Air Force Reserve and operated as WGARS. Most of WGARS was acquired from private owners; the remainder was acquired from the Navy.

WGNAS and WGARS provide materials, facilities, services, and training in direct support of all units assigned to them. Activities that generate, store, or dispose of hazardous waste at the facilities can be grouped into four categories: aircraft maintenance, base civil engineering, fuel operation, and personnel training. There are four landfills on WGNAS and WGARS property, several hazardous waste storage areas, a wastewater retention basin, a wastewater treatment plant, and numerous other structures, including aircraft hangars, training facilities, maintenance shops, office buildings, fuel tanks, and barracks.

Three sources of potential contamination have been evaluated at the site: Privet Road Landfill, Source 1N; the Fire Training Area, Source 5N; and the Washrack Area, Source 1A. Analysis of ground water samples collected from wells located near these sources detected eight compounds at high levels of contamination. Those compounds are trichloroethene (TCE), tetrachloroethene (PCE), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), 1,1,1-trichloroethane, 1,1-dichloroethane, 1,1-dichloroethene, and 1,2-dichloroethene. Analysis of ground water samples obtained from a drinking water well at WGNAS showed levels of PCE above health-based benchmarks.

Approximately 821 employees at the 2 facilities are served by a contaminated well.

**Status (September 1995):** EPA is currently considering various alternatives for the site.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.