

Department of Defense
Base Realignment And Closure Sites (BRACS)

Defense Electronics Supply Center (DESC)

Editor's note: As part of closing a military base, the Department of Defense must look for contaminants in soil, air and water above and below the ground's surface. When contamination is found, the government develops a plan to ensure that the public will not come in contact with pollutants that could damage human health. Ohio EPA oversees this process to ensure that state as well as federal laws are upheld throughout any cleanup.



*Main entrance to the current Kettering Business Park from
Wilmington Pike.*

The former Defense Electronics Supply Center (aka Gentile Air Force Station) is located on Wilmington Pike, Kettering, Ohio.

Gentile Air Force Base opened in 1944 as the Army's Dayton Signal Corps Supply Agency. From 1944 until 1962, the depot warehoused electronics for the Army and Air Force. From 1962 until the base closed in 1993, it served as the clearinghouse for all electronics the United States military needed.

At the time the Air Force operated the site, some of the electronics parts needed to be cleaned with solvents. Trichloroethylene (or TCE) was one of the most common. This cleaner and solvent is a volatile that evaporates in the air.

We now know that although some TCE will evaporate when spilled or dropped on the ground, more will drain into the soil where it can become trapped or drain into the ground water beneath the earth's surface where it will break down.

In addition to TCE and its breakdown (or daughter) products, some sediments in the nearby stream were contaminated with poly-aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Scientists expect to find PAHs alongside asphalt roads and in urban settings. This is because man-made products such as asphalt and creosote (used to preserve some wood products) leach the contaminants when they are rained or snowed on.

Following 10 years of investigation and cleanup, affected soil and tainted stream sediment were hauled away.



This map shows where the Air Force found contamination and removed it. The Air Force and its contractor, under Ohio EPA's regulatory oversight, removed the contaminated soil and contaminated sediments in the stream. The soil was replaced with clean fill.

Ground water contamination remains, 18 feet beneath the ground's surface. The ground water contamination has not moved past the boundary of the Gentile site. Over time, it will break down naturally. Samples continue to be collected to ensure that the contamination does not move off site.

Click on map to view larger .pdf file of contamination.

Cleanup efforts lead to the development of an industrial park comprised 138 acres of the original 164 acre site. This industrial park provides 1,800 jobs. The remaining 26 acres have been cleaned up for re-development as a neighborhood park and adjacent residential area.

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Useful links:

- [Parcel A-F map and description](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Photographs of March 2000 stream removal](#)
- [City of Kettering](#)

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