

Southeastern PA Cold War Historical Society

Celebrating
our 16th
year



*Preserving History Through the Memories
of Those Who Created It*

Did you know?

**The Greater Philadelphia Region
has a rich aerospace heritage!**

To celebrate **America250**, we'll be sharing some of the region's
aerospace heritage throughout 2026!
Look for our monthly posts and Happy Birthday America!

250 AMERICA PA™
NONPROFIT AFFILIATE

Did you know?



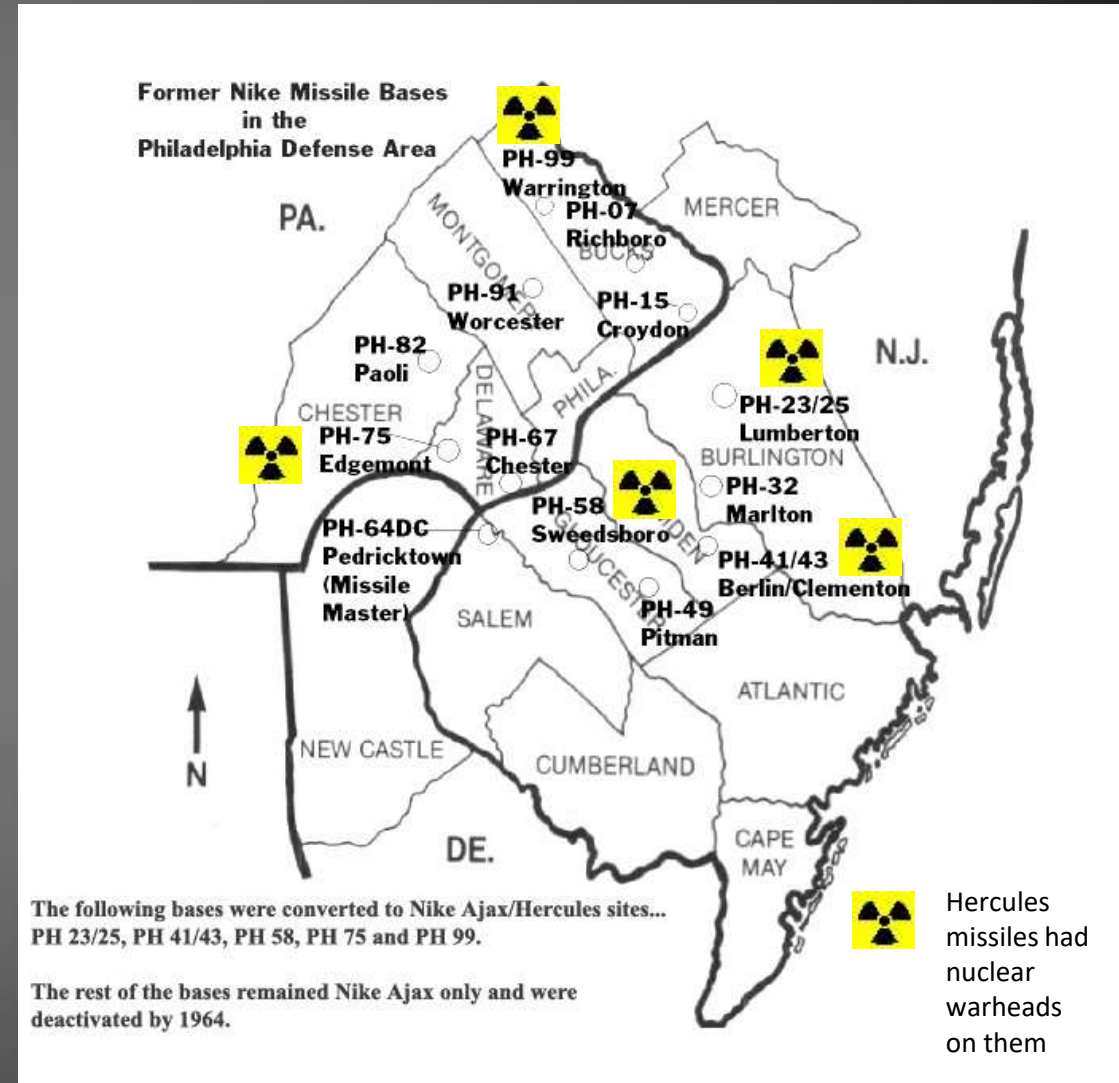
Did you know?

Project Nike was a U.S. Army project proposed in May 1945 by Bell Laboratories to develop a line-of-sight anti-aircraft missile system. The project delivered the United States' first operational anti-aircraft missile system, the Nike Ajax, in 1953, with the goal of defending from Soviet bomber attacks during the Cold War.



Did you know?

The Nike batteries were organized in Defense Areas and placed as “rings of protection” around population centers and strategic locations such as long-range bomber bases, nuclear plants, and (later) ICBM sites. The Philadelphia District of the Corps of Engineers supervised the construction of a circle of 12 Nike Ajax sites in the mid-1950s which formed the Philadelphia Defense Area. Sites averaged 25 miles from the center of Philadelphia and were located in PA and NJ.



Did you know?

MIM-14 Nike
Hercules : USA
(USA)



By the late 1950's the Nike Ajax missile was replaced by the more capable Nike Hercules missile, **which often carried a nuclear warhead**. It had improved speed, range and accuracy, and could intercept ballistic missiles. This allowed for fewer bases to provide needed protection. Regular Army batteries were either upgraded to the Nike Hercules system or decommissioned. Batteries were manned by both Regular Army and Army National Guard units.

Did you know?

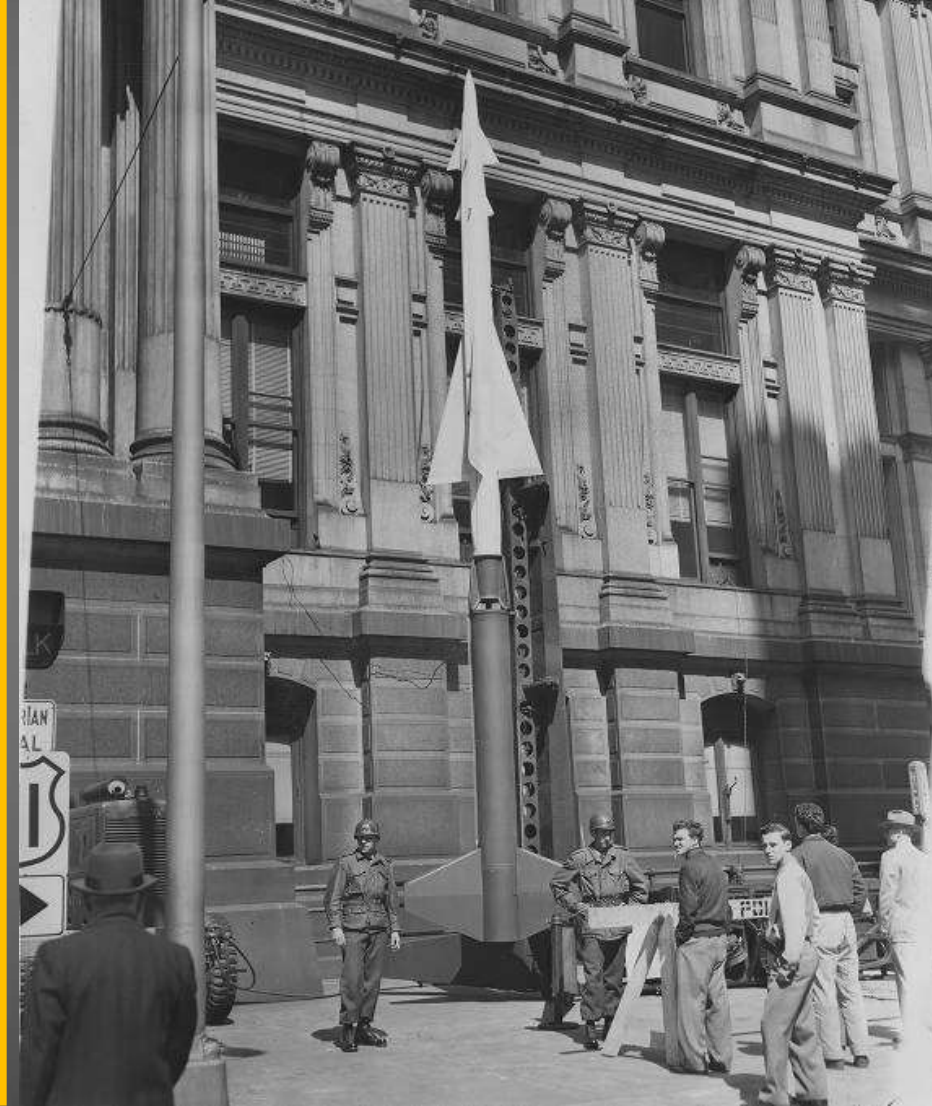
The contributions of Army personnel who manned the Philadelphia Defense Area were recognized on April 24, 1963 as **Mayor James Tate** presided over a ceremony declaring that day in Philadelphia as "ARADCOM* Day."



*Army Air Defense Command

Did you know?

Army's supersonic guided missile, the Nike, towers over guards and spectators at the east side of Philadelphia City Hall, where it was on exhibit for Armed Forces Week. It was under 24-hour guard (3/11/1954).

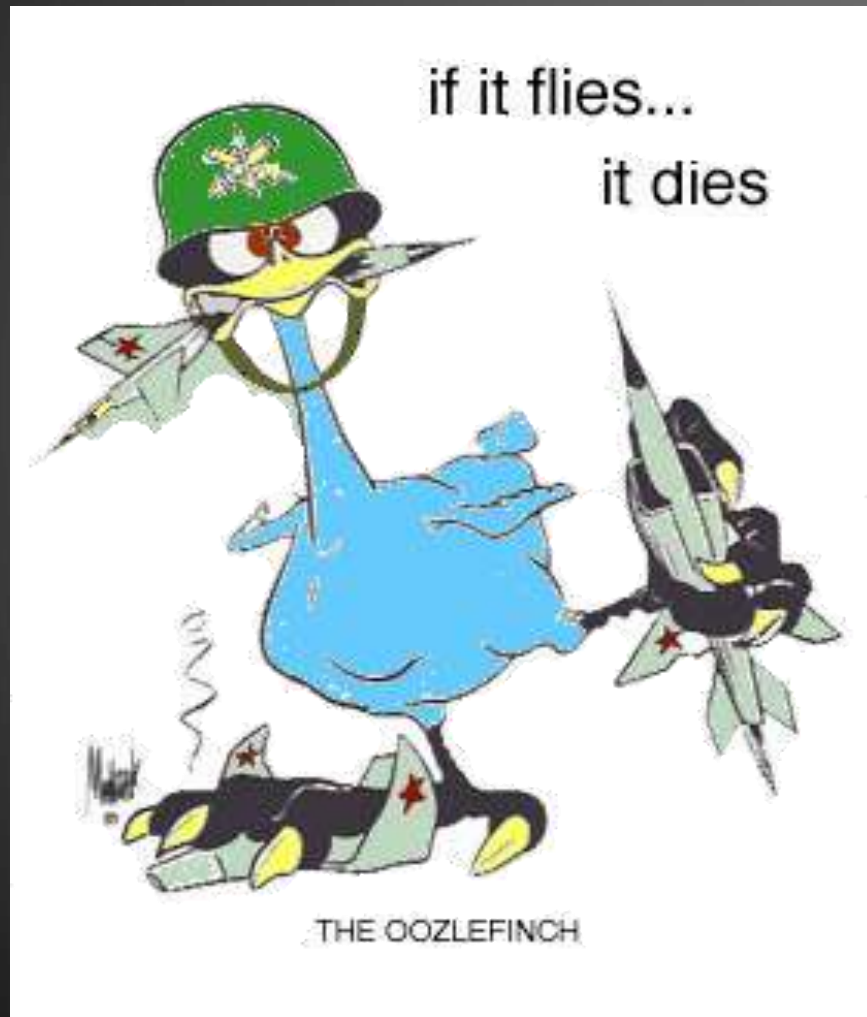


Did you know?



Following her selection as Miss Armed Forces, WAC Private Wanda Lea Amb, of Anthony, KS, sat on an Army Nike missile to greet participants in a Reyburn Plaza ceremony opening Philadelphia's observance of Armed Forces Week (5/11/1959).

Did you know?



The Oozlefinch, a mythical bird and “guardian of all missilemen”, had a long and distinguished history with many U.S. Army Artillery branches dating back to 1905.

It was adopted by the Air Defense Artillery Family and possessed “unique” qualities. It was completely featherless, flew backwards at supersonic speeds, and preyed on Soviet bombers, which it snatched out of the sky with its powerful talons.

Did you know?

Soviet development of ICBMs decreased the value of the Nike (aircraft) air defense system.

Beginning around 1965, the number of Nike batteries was reduced.

The signing of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) in the early 1970's and defense budget reductions resulted in deactivation of nearly all Nike sites in the continental United States by April 1974. Some units remained active until the later part of that decade in a coastal air defense role.

Website references

- [Project Nike – Wikipedia](#)
- [Philadelphia Defense Area](#)
- [Richboro Pennsylvania Nike Base PH07A](#)
- [Oozlefinch](#)
- [Oozlefinch – Wikipedia](#)
- [George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs - Digital Collections](#)