

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

PROPOSED NEW ARMED FORCES RESERVE CENTER FORT ALLEN, JUANA DIAZ, PUERTO RICO

JANUARY 2009

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] 1500–1508) for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 *United States Code* 4321 et seq.) and 32 CFR Part 651.14 (*Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*) guidelines, the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR), 1st Mission Support Command, performed an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the potential environmental and human health effects associated with implementing Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) at Fort Allen, Juana Díaz, Puerto Rico.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is to construct and operate a 150-member Armed Forces Reserve Center (AFRC) and an unheated storage building for use by Army Reserve and Army National Guard units at Fort Allen, Puerto Rico. The AFRC will provide about 55,000 square feet of interior space, and the unheated storage building will provide up to 2,706 square feet of space. The project will also provide adequate parking for all military and privately owned vehicles. Military vehicles that will use the parking facilities at the AFRC include a small number of buses or trucks used to transport Soldiers and supplies. No military vehicles will be assigned to the AFRC. Construction of the AFRC will be completed by no later than September 2011.

The AFRC will be on the south-central portion of Fort Allen on a 10-acre site at the south central portion of the base, previously known as the parade field. The site, lying immediately north of Blair Avenue/Street #1 where Route 158 enters the installation, is bounded by Blair Avenue/Street #1, 5th Street, 7th Street, and Avenue A.

The proposed AFRC will support operations of the USAR 8th Brigade (Multifunctional), 108th Division (Institutional Training) unit. The brigade consists of approximately 150 personnel. The Puerto Rico Army National Guard (PRARNG) 201st Regiment Regional Training Institute (RTI) will also train at the new AFRC. The PRARNG 201st RTI has a staff of 48 and average student load of 100.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternatives to the proposed action that were considered included one alternative location for the new AFRC and the No Action alternative.

One alternative location for the proposed AFRC was considered, based on availability of suitable land at Fort Allen. Under this alternative, the AFRC would be constructed on a 20-acre former detention center site on the southwestern portion of Fort Allen. The site was historically used as a military and juvenile prison. It contains numerous housing buildings, an infirmary, and administrative buildings, all of which are abandoned and which would have to be demolished. The Prison Site alternative is evaluated in detail in the EA.

The No Action alternative assumes that the Army would continue its mission at Fort Allen as it existed in fall 2005, with no unit relocations and no new facilities constructed. Because the BRAC Commission's recommendations must be implemented, continuation of the fall 2005 Fort

Allen mission is not possible without further Congressional action. The No Action alternative serves as a baseline alternative against which other alternatives can be evaluated. The No Action alternative is evaluated in the EA.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The attached EA describes the potential environmental effects of implementing the proposed action and determines the significance of the implementation on each of the resource areas analyzed. The EA concluded that implementing the proposed action will not have a significant adverse impact, either direct or cumulative, on the natural or human environment in the area of potential effect for the action.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

The EA and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were available for review and comment from November 21 through December 24, 2008. Notices of availability of the documents were published in English and Spanish in the Puerto Rico newspaper *El Nuevo Día* on November 21, 2008. No comments on the EA or draft FONSI were received from the public or federal agencies. The Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office agreed with the USAR's finding that the project will not affect historic properties. The Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources commented that the project will not have adverse effects on natural resources. Copies of letters received from these agencies are attached to this FONSI. No comments from other Commonwealth agencies were received.

NEPA CONSIDERATIONS

Based upon the analysis of potential impacts, which are documented in the attached EA, and consideration of comments received on the EA, the USAR has determined that the proposed action does not constitute a major federal action affecting the quality of human health or the environment. Because there will be no significant impact resulting from the implementation of the proposed action, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.



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8 Feb 09

Date