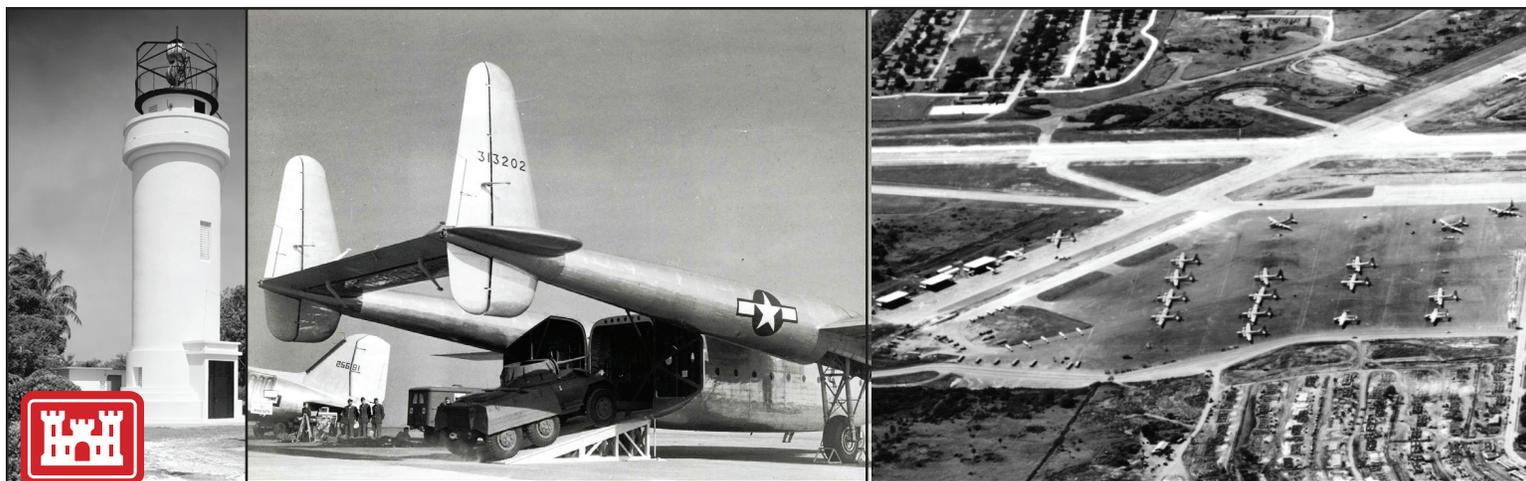


## PROPOSED PLAN



FEBRUARY 2018

### DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION PROGRAM FOR FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES

Across the country, the Department of Defense acquired properties, often during times of war, to use for military training, testing and demonstrations. When no longer needed, many of these properties were cleaned up according to the best practices available at the time and then transferred to other owners such as private individuals or other government entities. These Formerly Used Defense Sites can range from privately owned farms to National Parks. They also include residential, industrial and educational properties. We are committed to protecting people and the environment and improving public safety by cleaning up these properties. The Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites was established to evaluate and, if necessary, to remediate Formerly Used Defense Sites. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) manages the program on behalf of the Department of Defense.

Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, also known as Superfund, in 1980 and the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act in 1986. These laws give the Corps the authority for certain cleanup activities and dictate the process we must follow. We conduct investigations to determine the potential risk to people and the environment from the military's use of the property. Public involvement and community participation are important components of the process. The Corps partners with stakeholders throughout the process, including congressional representatives, state and local governments, regulatory and environmental agencies, and affected property owners.

### BACKGROUND

The U.S. government began acquiring property in 1939 to establish what became known as Ramey Air Force Base. Located north of Aguadilla, it grew to encompass approximately 4,357 acres. In addition to runways, hangars and related structures, it also included medical facilities, a golf course, water treatment plants and housing. Initially known as Borinquén Field, it was an important location during World War II, providing a base for reconnaissance flights to defend the US against German U-boats. It also served as a refueling station and maintenance area for aircraft flying to Europe and Africa. In 1948 it was renamed Ramey Air Force Base and was operated under the Strategic Air Command. Ramey played a critical role during the Cold War for reconnaissance missions and refueling squadrons. B-52 bombers arrived at Ramey in the 1950s, and bomber crews continued to be on alert at Ramey until 1972.

By 1973, the Air Force no longer needed the base, and it was deactivated. The property was transferred to other entities, and now the former base is home to Rafael Hernandez Airport and other governmental facilities and private enterprises.

### ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS

A number of investigations have been conducted over the years at two locations known as Landfill Area 1 (about 5.4 acres) and Suspected Waste Area 2 (approximately 11 acres). They are in an undeveloped area within the airport property, south of the runway. The purpose of the investigations was to determine if there are any environmental impacts attributable to the military.

The investigations included reviewing historical documents and photographs, and geophysical surveys to identify buried debris and to assess the boundaries of the potential landfill and suspected waste areas. Teams also collected 160 samples from the soil,



## FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES | Ramey Air Force Base

sediment, and groundwater, and they dug holes (known as test pits) to see if debris associated with a landfill was present. They looked in 18 test pits in Landfill 1 Area and 30 in Suspected Waste Area 2. These tools, along with other tests, helped the Corps determine how the military used these two areas and if there are military-related environmental impacts.

There is evidence that the Air Force did use Landfill 1 Area for that purpose, but they did not find buried debris at Suspected Waste Area 2 which means the Air Force did not use that area as a landfill. Some metals were detected in the soil within Landfill 1 and in the soil around the landfill, but their concentrations were at or below the levels detected in the soil in areas away from the landfill. Some metals occur naturally in the environment, and the amounts vary according to location. Samples collected away from the landfill document what amount of metals in the soil is considered normal. The test results, along with the risk assessment, indicate there are no environmental impacts associated with the military's use of the area.

### PROPOSED PLAN

The next step in the federally mandated process is the Proposed Plan. It summarizes the Remedial Investigation and presents recommendations and alternatives. There is no evidence of environmental impacts associated with the military at Landfill 1, and there is no evidence that the military ever used the Suspected Waste Area 2 as a landfill. Therefore, no further action is required. (Please see the Proposed Plan for further information.)



### YOUR OPINION MATTERS

The Corps encourages you to comment on the Proposed Plan during the public comment period. Please submit your comments no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 13, 2018, by calling (toll free) 800.710.5184., emailing [FUDS.PuertoRico@usace.army.mil](mailto:FUDS.PuertoRico@usace.army.mil) or mailing your comments to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, ATTN: Wilberto Cubero (CESAJ-PM-M), 701 San Marco Boulevard, Jacksonville, FL 32207. Mail postmarked by April 13, 2018, will be accepted. Public comments received during this period will be considered in the final decision-making process.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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